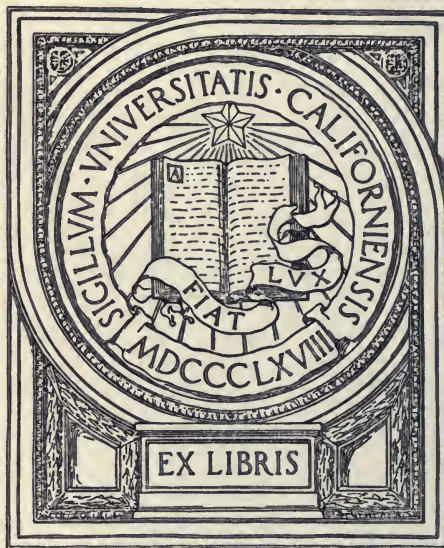


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THE FIREBRAND OF THE INDIES

THE FIREBRAND OF
THE INDIES

A ROMANCE OF FRANCIS XAVIER

BY

E. K. SETH-SMITH

“Go, set all on fire.”

*St. Ignatius Loyola to St. Francis Xavier
selling out for the Indies*

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK AND TORONTO : THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

*Christian,
Ha! Ha!*

ALBION

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History of Flummas.

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THE FIREBRAND OF THE INDIES

PROLOGUE

ONE chilly autumn evening, early in the sixteenth century, a weary, mud-stained traveller was limping along the Rue Saint Jacques, the principal street of the University Quarter of Paris, leading a heavily laden donkey. In spite of his shabby cloak and worn boots, and the fact that his steeple-crowned hat, battered by wind and weather, lacked the fashionable plume ; in spite of his lameness and his forty years, his was no common appearance. The dark, worn face, high forehead and keen eyes gave him an air of distinction, and the carriage of his head and shoulders was both aristocratic and military.

As he led his tired donkey over the cobbles, he looked with grave interest from side to side at the great blocks of college buildings about him, with their bewildering mass of gabled and turreted roofs, amongst which a church spire shot up here and there ; and once or twice he stopped for a brief glance through one of the arched gateways into a wide quadrangle, and listened to the droning voices from the lecture rooms beyond.

"Where is the Collège Montaigu ?" he asked of a beggar, who, covered with filthy bandages, was crouching

in the shelter of one of these archways, whining for alms to everyone who passed.

The beggar stretched a skinny arm towards the church of St. Etienne des Prés, and directed him to the left, renewing his demand for alms: "Alms, for the love of Heaven, *mon maître*."

"I am no '*maître*,' but an ignorant scholar," was the rather stern reply, accompanied by a small coin and a searching look, which caused the man to collect his rags and hobble off with some haste, conscious that his complaints would not bear much scrutiny.

The traveller, following the beggar's directions, soon came in sight of the massive tower with its gabled turrets, which flanked the gateway of the Collège Montaigu. With a determined expression on his dark, tanned face he stood looking through the round-arched gateway, until with a joyous and discordant uproar a mass of fresh-faced boys, mere children for the most part, in torn and shabby gowns, came surging past him through the gateway, shouting and singing in a lively jumble of French, Spanish, Italian and German. One, greatly daring, pulled his donkey's tail; another, emboldened by this courageous act, began to pelt the unoffending beast with stones, but at a word from its master, and one flash of those deep-set black eyes, the whole crowd of youngsters beat a retreat, and a few minutes later were in the midst of a wild scuffle with a company of ragged urchins from the back streets, who were lying in wait for them round the corner of St. Etienne des Prés.

The traveller looked after them with a quaint smile.

"My fellow-scholars," he said, half-aloud in Spanish; then turned and addressed the donkey:

"Sancho, my friend, this is our destination. To-

morrow, behold me, Sancho, putting myself once more to school amongst these little boys. To-night, however, we must find a lodging. Come we back to those crazy, dirty houses in the street we passed through but now, where the top stories nearly touch one another across the way. There, maybe, we can find something which is not beyond my purse. You and I, Sancho, have been worse lodged than that."

The prospect, however, was not inviting, especially in the gathering dusk, and in the hope of seeing some one who could advise or direct him, he turned down the street which led towards a neighbouring college and almost ran into a hilarious group of students in long, black capes and pointed hats, who were just emerging from the lecture room of Ste. Barbe.

"Come, Francisco," one was saying, "there's a tavern near the Porte St. Jacques——"

The traveller raised his hat.

"Messire," said he, addressing the foremost, "I am a stranger here, a poor gentleman of Spain. Would you of your kindness recommend me a lodging for the night? There are, as you see," and he glanced whimsically at the donkey, "two of us."

"And you will not be the only asses at the University," put in the irrepressible young gentleman who had suggested the tavern. He had lost his cap and his cape was very much awry.

"It seems not," returned the other gravely, whereat, as at some huge jest, the rest roared with laughter.

"There's Simon the coffin-maker," broke in another. "He is old and mouldy, and so are his lodgings. Or there's Mère Suzanne, who's one-eyed and a witch, and washes foul linen."

"Silence, ye fools!" said a laughing voice, as a tall young man of three- or four-and-twenty stepped forward and doffed his bonnet gracefully.

"My countryman, I think," he said in Spanish. His voice was pleasant and his accent familiar. "It pleases me, señor, to greet a gentleman from Spain. I am of Navarre."

"I also," said the traveller readily, as at a glance he took in the youth's appearance, his well-knit, active figure, clear-cut, boyish face and merry eyes.

"If you are taking a course of philosophy at Ste. Barbe," the young man went on, "I believe my friend Favre here" (and with a wave of his hand he indicated a broad-shouldered young man with a slow smile) "has a vacant bed in his room, since his late companion cracked his brain with overmuch study, or"—as a burst of remonstrance greeted this statement—"some other indiscretion. Speak up, Pierre; would you not be enchanted to house this gentleman?"

Then, turning again to the traveller and indicating Favre:

"He is of a peaceful nature and not given to brawling. He is, moreover, passing honest, and would not pick your pockets while you slept. And as for the humble ass, I have a varlet who would find him a stable somewhere."

"I thank you," said the traveller, smiling, "but a course of philosophy is beyond my attainment at present. My intention is to enter the Collège Montaigu."

A dead silence of utter amazement greeted this statement. Then the student who had first spoken broke in pertly:

"What! with the babes? You had best look for a wet-nurse, my friend, and a rattle!"

"Peace," said the young Spaniard with sudden sternness. "No insults here. Señor, permit me to come with you, and to direct you to a decent tavern." He made a step forward as he spoke.

The traveller scanned the other's face keenly before he answered.

"I thank you, señor, and will gladly accept your offer. My name is Ignazio de Loyola."

"And mine," and the young man flung off the high-sounding title with a carelessness which could not altogether cloak his pride in it, "is Francisco de Xavier y de Jasso."

CHAPTER 1

IN PARIS LECTURE ROOMS

A YEAR had passed, and the middle-aged *béjaune* or freshman had completed his elementary studies at the Collège Montaigu. Sitting with smooth-faced boys on the dirty straw of the lecture room, as they crowded round a reeking lamp, he had studied with tireless diligence and said little, while the impertinent jibes of his young companions passed over him harmlessly, and soon ceased altogether. But a crop of rumours and strange reports began at once to gather round him. That he had been a soldier he admitted, in answer to their questions. Some said he had fought brilliantly, but being rejected by his lady on account of his lame leg he had determined to change his way of life and become a philosopher. There was a rumour also that he had been imprisoned at Salamanca, and when asked about it he replied that it was true, but would give no further explanation. Was he then a criminal, driven by the fear of rearrest to cross the Pyrenees on foot and hide himself in Paris? What was contained in all those books which had come so tightly packed on the back of his patient donkey? Magic, perhaps. If so, then the ass must be his familiar spirit. Nonsense, some better instructed youth would retort; magic was out of fashion: nowadays one did not believe in it, and, besides, Don Pilgrim (as they nicknamed him) had sold the donkey.

More likely he was a Lutheran ; he looked like a man to hold dangerous doctrines ; better to have nothing to do with him if one did not want to burn.

So the prudent kept aloof from him ; yet it was noticeable as time went on that certain students, often further advanced in Latin and Logic than he, attached themselves to him with the ardour of disciples.

But among these Francisco de Xavier was not to be found. Indeed, their paths seldom crossed. Xavier's path, the path which led to the heights of fame, lay straight before him. Already he was one of the most popular as well as most brilliant men at the University, and a distinguished career was prophesied for him. What had he in common with a poor ignoramus like Messire Loyola ? To a countryman, especially to one who was his equal in birth, he was all courtesy on the rare occasions that they met, but there the acquaintance must end.

But it seemed not. Messire Loyola, having completed his course at Montaigu, desired to take a course of philosophy at Ste. Barbe. Pierre Favre, Francisco de Xavier and another student now shared one of the college chambers, and, the third student leaving suddenly, his bed was at once bespoken by the persistent Loyola. Francisco, when told of it by Favre, merely shrugged his shoulders.

" Provided he is not quarrelsome, and does not raise the devil, nor meddle overmuch with your soul or mine, it is all one to me," he said.

" He seems a quiet fellow," said Favre ; " I did not know he meddled with souls."

" At Salamanca, I am told," replied Xavier, " he had the effrontery to preach, and that without even a degree ! Small wonder he found himself in prison for heresy."

"Oh, heresy," laughed Favre; "your Spanish countrymen, señor, saving your presence, spy heresy behind every bush."

"Maybe," assented Xavier easily. "Come with me to the city, Pierre. I want some new hose."

"And those as good as new," sighed the careful Favre.

And certainly, when the older man came, it did not seem as though he were likely to interfere in any way. From Favre, rather than from Xavier, he would sometimes ask advice in his studies; but apart from this he would sit silently in the evenings poring over his books by candlelight, never speaking unless directly addressed. He heard Mass daily, but so did Favre. Xavier, too, attended pretty frequently; it had been the custom of his family in Navarre. And when the two young men, on the rare evenings when Xavier was not supping out, discussed their hopes and ambitions, he appeared to be entirely absorbed in his books.

Said Xavier to his friend, as they were returning from a public disputation held in one of the college halls on St. Nicholas' Day:

"These disputations are attended worse and worse. Know you who is at the bottom of it?"

"Not I," said Favre absently, his brain still puzzling over some of the points of the debate.

"Why, our harmless-seeming friend, Messire Ignazio. He has quite a following now, Heaven knows why, and neither they nor he ever attend them."

"True, he never does, but I had hardly noticed it. What does he do then on Sundays and holidays?"

Xavier shook his head and laughed.

"Ask me not. But the Rector is furious about it. He

saith he will have him flogged for hindering the students' studies."

Pierre started and coloured hotly.

"What, a man of his age? Maître Gouvea would never——" He broke off, biting his lip.

Xavier laughed.

"We shall see. What! has Don Pilgrim caught you also, my friend?"

Favre hastily denied it. But the rumour about the flogging soon became a certainty. The Rector of Ste. Barbe, having received complaints from the heads of other colleges that this troublesome Spaniard was drawing away their students from those holiday disputations which were most likely to stimulate them in their studies, had determined to put an end to the nuisance by a public flogging. The very next day the sentence was to be carried out.

Messire Ignazio was neither more nor less silent than usual that evening. Xavier was out until late at a tavern to which he had been invited by one of the college professors. Favre, shy and unhappy, endeavoured to read, but found his thoughts and his eyes wandering time after time towards the grave, dark face opposite to him. Had he no fear of the coming ignominy? Was he not picturing, as Favre was picturing, the scene in the college hall to-morrow? Did he not see himself, stripped to the waist, running the gauntlet of a double row of jeering youths, each armed with a stinging rod? Would he survive the disgrace, or would he escape from it by flight?

At least he gave no sign of his inward feelings. Pierre fancied that he spent a good part of the night by his bedside, but the long December nights were very dark.

Perhaps he was a little longer at Mass than usual next morning, but that was all.

Keen excitement pervaded the hall after dinner when the appointed hour arrived. Every window was thronged by the inquisitive faces of the townsfolk, and the cropped heads of the boys from the Collège Montaigu. Masters and students stood ready with their rods, bandying jokes with the people at the windows.

"My faith! it will be a rare show; better than a mumming," seemed to be the universal sentiment, and the heavy rafters echoed with the jests and laughter. "An old fellow like that, too! One may see a boy flogged any day."

Xavier, who had been in especially gay spirits earlier in the day, turned away, suddenly sickened by the prospect.

"A disgusting spectacle, Pierre," he said. "They do not get me to do their dirty work," and the pair of friends stepped aside to join a small group of students who were standing apart with troubled faces.

The minutes passed, and still the great door at the end of the hall did not open. The babble of voices died down. There was a hush of expectancy.

"The wretch has escaped!" exclaimed somebody from the window.

"Not he! not he!" replied a dozen voices. "All the doors and windows have been guarded. He asked an audience of the Rector. He is with him now. Silence there! he comes."

He did come. The great door swung slowly open. Every eye strained towards it, and there emerged the Rector of Ste Barbe and Ignazio de Loyola. And the Rector's hand was on Ignazio's shoulder.

Amazement held the spectators dumb. In utter silence Maître Gouvea led Messire Loyola into the centre of the hall.

Breathlessly masters and students watched, as the Rector, his grey head bowed, knelt at the feet of the sentenced man.

"Messire Loyola," and his voice broke, "I implore your pardon, and also—the pardon of God."

Then all was movement and confusion. Favre sprang forward with shining eyes. Xavier turned quickly away and left the hall. That evening all was as usual, and neither Xavier nor Favre ever mentioned the incident in Loyola's presence.

And still Loyola pursued his policy of silence towards Francisco de Xavier. But sometimes the young man would look up to find those inscrutable eyes fixed upon him, and would turn sharply away. And at times Loyola would watch from his window the gay, graceful figure as, fresh from the hands of his tailor, he would stroll down the street, humming a lively air, stopping to greet a companion here and there, welcomed by masters and students alike. At these times a curious yearning look would come into the older man's face, and, the room being empty, he would turn and kneel for a time before his crucifix.

CHAPTER II

"AN HIDALGO AND A GENTLEMAN"

"SEÑOR FRANCISCO," asked Favre one day, as they walked back from a lecture together, "what do you think now of our chamber-fellow?"

Xavier looked surprised. Though constantly in Loyola's company, the subject had by mutual consent been avoided between them, each being conscious that the other disagreed with him. Now, however, Pierre opened the subject deliberately, though with an evident effort. Xavier's answer came promptly and without hesitation.

"I do not like him. And you?"

"I do not know, señor." To this young hidalgo, who had stooped to honour him with his friendship, the peasant Savoyard, in spite of his own great attainments, was always studiously respectful. "Sometimes I could hate him, for he disturbs me strangely and makes me discontented with my life—I cannot say why. And yet sometimes—I could almost love him, señor."

Xavier laughed. His ready laugh, free from any spice of sarcasm or malice, was one of his chief charms.

"You are welcome to love him for all I care, Pierre mine. I shall not trouble him with my affection, nor with my dislike either, so long as he leaves me in peace." Then, more gravely, "But what is the man aiming at? Tell me that."

"I do not know," replied Favre absently.

They walked on in silence for a few minutes, then he said slowly :

"Sometimes I think I will be a monk, señor."

"Pouf ! nonsense, man !" returned Xavier gaily. "The monks are lazy devils, though I suppose, as a good Catholic, I ought not to say it. Nonsense, I say ! There are better things than that within your reach. Who knows ? You may find yourself in a Cardinal's hat before you die, and a King's Counsellor into the bargain. Greetings, my lord Cardinal !" and, with an elaborate bow, he swept the ground with his "bonnet."

But the other's smile was half-hearted, and he did not reply.

It was a fresh spring day, and the evenings were growing light and long. The south winds blew the scent of the fields over the crowded streets of the University, and the hill of Montmartre was wrapped in a delicate mist. As the two young men turned a corner, a man crossed the road and bared his bristly head to Xavier with a hand that was not quite steady. He had a broken nose and a debased appearance.

"Ha ! Miguel, you rogue ! What tavern have you sprung from ? " was his master's greeting.

The man grinned sheepishly, and held out a sealed packet.

"A gentleman come from Spain, señor, now lodging at the Tête d'Or, bade me bring it to you, and say that all charges have been paid by your worship's brother."

"My brother ? Blessings on him !" and Francisco broke the seals with alacrity and stood for some minutes absorbed in the study of the close, careful writing. As

he did so, his face clouded with a look of passing annoyance : then he laughed a little defiantly.

" Listen to this, Pierre," he said.

" ' You have now,' he read aloud, ' been seven years in this College, in which time, as I understand, you have gained both learning and honours, as is meet that one of our name should do. But I hear likewise that you are a spendthrift and a wastrel, and since I am at this time hard put to it to maintain the estates of Xavier and of Jasso, with my reduced fortune, I had wellnigh wrote you that I could no longer endure the charges that you make upon me, and that it would be necessary that you should return home and seek a means of honest livelihood. This I was minded to do and spake of my intention to our sister, the Abbess Magdalena, but she made suit for you, saying she still had hopes that you might bring honour to the Church and to our father's name. I hope, therefore, that you may yet amend your way of life.' "

Francisco laughed again shortly ; then his face grew thoughtful.

" Good sister Magdalena, to plead for the scapegrace ! " he said. " I saw her but once, Pierre, when I was not above five or six years old. My mother took me to her convent, for she was a nun already when I was yet in swaddling clothes." He was silent a moment, dimly recalling the convent parlour into which his mother had led him, and the sweet, austere young face which had scanned his so gravely and so kindly.

" What can she know of me, Pierre ? ' That I might bring honour to the Church.' Did she mean a professorship and a canonry ? Scarcely, I think. What saith Juan further ? " and he turned again to the letter and continued to read it to himself.

“ Much excellent advice,” was his summary, when he had read it, “ and no money. It is true these law charges have reduced him greatly. I must amend my manners. Poor Juan ! a good fellow, though he thinks me past praying for.” Then again turning to the letter, he read, as if to himself, and in a changed and softened voice : “ ‘ Our Lady Mother sends you her most loving greetings, praying you to remain in the grace of God.’ ”

He stuffed the letter into his pocket, and was turning away when he caught sight of the serving-man still hovering at a little distance.

“ What are you waiting for, Miguel, you rogue ? ”

“ Your pardon, señor,” mumbled the man, “ but you see this cloak of mine ? ”

“ Faith ! yes, I see it, and would that I did not. It is fitter to scare crows with than to clothe a gentleman’s servant. Thou hast been drunk, Miguel, and brawling, I’ll swear.”

“ Nay, señor, nay,” whined the fellow ; “ ’twas but a single mug I drank ; but your worship knows my head is weak, seeing that I drink so much water. But a rogue fell on me, señor, and tore my cloak thus as I was coming home, and robbed me of my purse, and I think shame to wait on a gentleman in such guise, I do, indeed, señor.”

“ All lies, Miguel,” returned his master resignedly, “ but,” and his hand went to his purse, “ I suppose there is no help for it. Look you,” and he held out a couple of silver pieces, “ these are my last, and my illustrious brother, Don Juan, will have me take to an honester calling than that of lecturing to this student rabble ere he assists me with more. (It was that velvet doublet, plague take the tailor !) Now begone, and take that scarecrow face of thine elsewhere.”

And as the man's unsteady legs carried him hurriedly down the street, Francisco added, taking his companion's arm :

" A sad rogue, that Miguel, but he would die for me, I think. What shall I do, Pierre, to repair these fortunes of mine ? "

Favre, thus directly appealed to, considered a moment.

" With a little care and a little husbanding of your resources, señor, I should have said they were bright enough."

" Yes, faith, and so they are," Xavier assented thoughtfully. " They say I am sure of a canonry before long. But at times, Pierre, I wonder, is the game worth the candle ? ' To bring honour to the Church ' ; what did she mean by that, I wonder ? "

And as Favre did not respond, he added, " Sometimes I am minded to throw it all up and take ship for the Indies."

" The saints forbid, señor ! And you as good a Latinist as any in Paris ! "

" But to what end, Pierre ? To teach rascally boys that Romulus had a wart on his nose, or to discuss which hath the most reality, a lover's dreams of his mistress or your new Spanish leather boots ? Are we all mad, Pierre, to strive for such things as we do strive for, night and day ? "

Favre looked troubled. These moods were rare with his friend, but they chimed in too well with his own for him to dismiss the subject easily. It was Xavier again who broke the silence, and then in a lighter tone.

" One thing at least I must do. I must write to this long-suffering brother of mine, and ask him to send me a

patent of my nobility. These things count for something here. I will do it at once, so come, let us go home."

And Francisco de Xavier y de Jasso unconsciously held his shapely head a little higher, as before his mind's eye hung the coveted parchment, declaring its owner to be "by ancient origin and descent . . . an hidalgo, nobleman and gentleman, entitled to use and enjoy all the prerogatives, exemptions, honours, liberties and privileges," etc. etc.

And with his usual cheery humour restored by the thought, he turned in under the austere, round-arched gateway of Ste. Barbe, and across the quadrangle to his chamber, just as the bells were beginning to ring for vespers.

CHAPTER III

TWO WAYS OF WARFARE

IT was growing dusk as he entered the room he shared with his two companions. Loyola, always indefatigable in his studies, was seated at the further window, near the corner which contained his bed and his books, taking full advantage of the remaining daylight. He looked up with the quiet smile which always gave Xavier a passing sense of annoyance. There was, as he said to Favre, "something masterful about it, as though he thought he could bend a man to his will." He took no notice of it, therefore, and proceeded to strike a light and search for a quill. Settled at length to his letter-writing, there was no sound in the room but the scratching of his pen. Loyola sat still at the window, where the light was quickly fading, and presently closed his book and remained looking at his companion who, with his gown flung over the back of his chair, was engrossed in his letter, sometimes stopping to consider, and running his fingers through his crisp black hair. The keen eyes took in every detail, the well-cut cloth doublet slashed with satin, the small starched ruff, the fashionable rapier, the young, vivid face.

Presently Francisco's native courtesy awoke.

"Will you not share my lamp, señor, if you are studying?"

"I thank you, but do not let me disturb what is, I

doubt not, a letter of importance." Nevertheless, he moved his chair nearer.

"Oh, as for that," said the younger man, who was not naturally reticent, and who never could withstand the deference paid to him by the middle-aged undergraduate, "it is to my brother, Don Juan de Xavier, in Navarre."

"I have heard of him, and also of Dr. Juan de Jasso, your father, who served the King of Navarre to his own undoing. Your brother, too, I think, suffered in the same cause? You bear a noble name, señor."

Francisco laid down his quill. He was proud of his family and proud of his father's name. Moreover, he had not been in Spain for several years, and here was a countryman who knew how to appreciate the reputation of the families of Xavier and of Jasso. With quiet skill, and more by his attention than by his words, Loyola drew him on to speak of them. Soon, the lad's early life lay open before him; the somewhat lonely childhood with his widowed mother in the grim, dismantled castle with its echoing corridors and dungeons, the constant anxiety for the elder brothers at the wars and in exile, the wolf-hunts in the snow and the mountain climbing which had braced and hardened him in muscle and sinew, and over all the atmosphere of pious austerity which had partially repelled him, but in which he yet seemed to take a kind of pride. At the mention of his mother, indeed, his voice grew almost reverential.

"Our men have been soldiers since the days of the Moors," Francisco went on, "and had there been a cause worth fighting for, I might have followed the tradition. But there is none, and so I came to Paris."

"No cause but one," returned Loyola a little absently. But he did not explain his meaning. Then, "It may be

that I met your brothers in the field. I, too, was at Pampeluna."

"You?" asked Xavier with sudden interest, and an involuntary glance at the lame leg. "You fought there, señor?"

"I fought there, yes, on what your brothers would have called the wrong side; but those feuds are dead now. Other things are dead also. I thought once to win fame on that field, Señor Francisco, but a cannon-ball at Pampeluna smashed both my leg and my career; at least, I thought so then. So here am I, an old soldier, putting myself to school."

He spoke cheerfully, even gaily. Xavier tried to express his polite sympathy.

"That cannon-ball did me a great service," he replied with quiet conviction, but did not seem inclined to pursue the subject. "But you," he added questioningly, "it was philosophy that attracted you, not arms?"

There was no withstanding the man. Who at twenty-four could resist pouring out his plans and ambitions to one who listened with such absorbed, sympathetic and flattering attention? It all came out then, the story of his years of struggle and of study, of gaiety and extravagance, of warm friendships and passing quarrels, and the hope which had lighted it all like some fitful star, the hope of a great name, a great position, undying fame.

He talked on, his face glowing; then suddenly paused, conscious that he was treating this man, whom on his own showing he disliked, as a friend. And he remembered Pierre's admission, "Sometimes I could love him." Whence had the man this fascination? He sat ashamed of his impulsiveness.

But Loyola was gazing thoughtfully at the lamp.

"I doubt not," he said slowly, "that fame awaits you, Señor Francisco. I have known it from the first."

But although he spoke kindly and with conviction, there was a reservation in his tone. It was almost as though he had said, "And yet——"

And so obvious was it that something more was to follow that Francisco himself involuntarily spoke the implied words :

"And yet ? "

"And yet, señor," the older man continued, speaking in that deep, quiet voice of his, and still with his eyes upon the smoky lamp, "*what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?* "

Xavier started and stiffened. The climax was so unexpected that for the moment he had no answer ready. All his old antagonism revived in a twinkling. He was angry with the man, angry with himself for having laid himself open to this. It was impertinence, of course. What right had this ignorant scholar to bait him thus, him, Francisco de Xavier, with a brilliant degree already within his grasp ? And the recollection of his own words to Favre, "Are we mad, Pierre, to strive for such things as we do strive for ? " only stiffened him the more.

"I think, Master Pilgrim," he said coldly, using the nickname Loyola had gained among the students, "that you mistake the case. I have no intention of losing my soul."

Loyola was silent, and his silence stung Francisco the more.

"I am not a rake, señor, nor a libertine. Perhaps you are aware that I am to take priest's orders." Then suddenly his usual good-humour revived, and he laughed.

"I do not wish to paint a portrait of my virtues, but perhaps you may remember that we Xaviers have always been loyal sons of the Church. My mother is a saint, if such still walk the earth ; my sister an abbess——"

But Loyola did not seem to be listening. . . . "*If thy hand or thy foot offend thee,*" he was muttering, still looking at the lamp. Then he roused himself and turned to Francisco.

"You have given me your history, señor ; now perhaps I may give you a little of mine."

Xavier could not refuse to hear it. But that his pride was hurt and he would sooner have been alone, he would have welcomed the suggestion from this man who had so often roused his curiosity.

"Say on," he said, as graciously as he could.

"You know the castle of Loyola, nigh to Azpeitia ?" the elder man began. "Perhaps you have passed it ; at least you have heard of it, small though it be. But for the fact that my father was for Ferdinand and yours for the King of Navarre, it may be we should have met before. There at the castle was I born, like yourself a daring youngster, and my brain was filled by my old Basque nurse with all those tales of knightly adventure which they tell me here are growing out of fashion. I would be a knight, like Amadis of Gaul, or Roland, or the Cid. In time I was sent to Castille as page in the royal household, where they tricked me out in silks and velvets and stuffed me with dainty and unwholesome meats. But this would not content me, and I wearied my father that I might be trained in the practice of arms. For I would be a soldier and a great one : I would win myself immortal glory on the battle-field. And I had, of course, the lady of my dreams."

He paused, smiling scornfully over the memory.

"Poor fool!" he added, by way of comment on his own young ambitions. Francisco sat silent, interested in spite of himself, though his expression was as near to sullenness as was possible for his to be.

"Then came—Pampeluna, the cannon-ball, and years of torture and of a very hell of misery and broken hopes. My family bore with the gloomy wretch, I know not how. The leg was set, but crookedly, and it did not please me; the leeches promised that if it were reset I should not cut such a sorry figure; I might pass, indeed, for a gentleman of fashion if I could not fight. I consented. I let them break and reset it, and there followed more months of torture, and," with a glance at his lame leg, "no great gain. I tried reading my old friends the romances of chivalry, but they sickened me; I could no longer be a knight. I felt inclined to curse God and die."

Xavier's listening face was losing its sullen look. His own misfortunes, such as they were, were not like these.

"And then, to pass an idle hour, one lent me the *Lives of the Saints*. Sheer weariness drove me to read them, but once begun I could not leave them."

He paused, glanced thoughtfully at his companion, and went on:

"You said a while back, señor, that there was no cause worth fighting for. Here I found such a cause. I had sought high adventures: here I found one. I had sought to serve Ferdinand of Castille: here I found a King in whom all knightly perfections met. I had sought glory: here was promise of transcendent glory. I had coveted hardships in the pursuit of my quest: here were hardships enough awaiting those who would dare this greater

quest. I had sought a lady's favour : here was a fairer Lady who would aid me by her prayers. And, moreover, from this warfare a cripple even was not debarred."

He looked again at Francisco, but the young man made no sign. He was frowning a little.

"But there was one essential thing, without which this Quest was doomed to failure. And that—you know it, señor—is surrender to the Will of God."

It was quite dark in the street. The church-bells were ringing for Compline, and a party of scholars reeled by under the window, singing a drunken song. An old beggar woman across the road was whining for alms.

The lamp had burnt low and was beginning to smoke. Xavier rose to retrim it. As he did so the flame shot up and flickered round the shabby walls and scanty furniture, the books, and Loyola's crucifix. When at length Francisco spoke it was in a tone of rather forced flippancy.

"You will pardon me, Sir Pilgrim, but I take the world as I find it. If a man has nothing else he may feed on visions, and if he finds them satisfying, so much the better. I should be sorry to suggest, señor, that the grapes are sour, but I fancy that but for that unlucky cannon-ball you would have been as I am. I do what is required of me as a Catholic and a gentleman, and if, as you were kind enough to suggest a while ago, I lose my soul, I would have you remember that it is *my* soul and not yours, and therefore you need concern yourself no more about it !"

He had snatched up his bonnet, and had almost reached the door. At the same time Miguel's heavy steps were heard stumbling up the stairs with the supper-tray. Making the excuse that he wanted no supper he pushed

past the serving-man, and, whistling the same rollicking air that the students had been singing under the window, went out into the street.

But Loyola, as he turned again to his book, had not the air of a defeated man.

CHAPTER IV

CONQUERED

MORE than a year had passed, and it was again late autumn: wet, dark and blustering. The narrow streets of Paris were fouler than usual, and fevers lurked in the close alleys hidden behind the wider streets of the University. But neither megrims nor the damp straw and reeking atmosphere of the lecture rooms thinned the numbers that crowded daily to the College of Beauvais to hear Maître Xavier's lectures on Aristotle. The young professor was at the height of his popularity, and no career seemed beyond his reach.

Nevertheless, his friends observed that something was clouding his usually sunny temper. Favre found him alternately wildly hilarious and moody, almost irritable. Loyola he tried as far as possible to avoid, and they seldom met except at night, when his manner towards the older man was at times less than courteous. This Loyola ignored or did not notice: he attended Xavier's lectures and induced others to do the same, never obtruding himself, but always ready to do him a service. And at the times when they were unavoidably thrown together, Francisco would sometimes find himself melting a little, but the discovery would only result in a fresh access of coldness.

Xavier and Favre had ceased altogether to discuss their companion. Xavier, indeed, had several times

surprised the other two in deep and earnest conversation, and he gathered with a sense of vexation that Pierre had altogether yielded to that fascination which he could not deny, though he fought against it. After all, he reflected with a somewhat forced contempt, Pierre was of vulgar peasant origin, though a good fellow enough, and likely to be won by the condescension of a man of Loyola's rank. His nature was not petty enough for any real jealousy at the thought that Loyola had, in a manner, stolen his friend from him, but he missed Pierre's companionship.

So things went on until a touch of the prevailing fever kept Xavier one morning in his bed. He asked for his serving-man, but it appeared that Miguel had been spending the night at a tavern and was lying dead-drunk in the kitchen chimney corner. Loyola it was who, with a quiet authority, waited upon him, limping up and down the steep stairs to fetch his food, and concocting with his own hands a certain potent unguent which he declared he had found invaluable in his campaigning days. Francisco raged inwardly, and thanked him in terse reluctant phrases. The strained situation was only relieved when, towards evening, Miguel stumbled in, blear-eyed and unsteady, and, discovering Señor Ignazio in attendance on his master, cast upon him a look of sullen hatred, and stumbled out again, muttering oaths of a lurid description. His dishevelled appearance was so comical that involuntarily both men burst out laughing.

"Poor wretch!" said Xavier. "He bears no love to you, señor, though I do not know how you have offended him."

"He is jealous," returned Loyola, growing graver, "and in that mood might be dangerous."

"Oh, the fellow has a dangerous look, I grant," said Francisco lightly, "but though he is a blackguard and a drunkard he is harmless enough. I should like to be rid of him at times, but I cannot turn him loose in Paris after all these years, and, besides, he is useful." And the incident was forgotten.

With Francisco's recovery the old cold relationship was resumed. Once, indeed, his purse being emptier than usual and he having incautiously expressed his vexation at the appearance of a hosier's bill, Loyola ventured, with the courteous manner of one asking a favour, to offer him a loan. And though Francisco hastily refused it, knowing his companion's own poverty and keenly averse to being further indebted to him, yet he could not feel that there was any impertinence in the offer.

He was returning one night shortly before curfew from supping with some friends in the city, when near his own street-corner a horseman spurred up behind him and drew up abreast of him, calling out :

"Your pardon, *mon maître*, but can you direct me——"

Xavier and Miguel, who was behind him, had instinctively felt for the short rapiers without which it was dangerous to be abroad at night, but at this Francisco dropped his hand.

"Yes, sir, to whom ? "

"To the chambers of Maître Francisco de Xavier, lecturer at the College of Beauvais."

"You have come to the right man, then, for I am he."

The rider lifted his hat.

"Then," he said, handing him a sealed packet, "I bring you a letter from Navarre, from Don Juan de Xavier."

Francisco thanked him, asked his charges and paid

him, and the man rode away into the darkness. There was a light burning at the street corner in front of a rather battered image of the Madonna, and by this light he broke the seal and unfolded the letter. For a few minutes he read in silence : then Miguel heard a muttered exclamation and something like a stifled groan. The man sidled nearer to him, asking in his usual hoarse whisper :

“ No ill news, señor, I hope ? ”

“ Hold your peace,” returned his master with unusual sharpness, as he stuffed the letter into his pocket. Then, in rather a strained voice, “ And hasten : it is late.”

His two companions were still seated over the little brazier with which they warmed the room when he entered. He had heard their voices in low serious talk as he neared the door, but they broke off to welcome him. Even in the half-light the drawn look of his face did not escape Loyola, but he asked no questions. Nor did he next morning comment on the fact, of which he was well aware, that Xavier passed a wakeful, restless night.

Pierre noticed nothing. The young man, always gentle and retiring, had for some days been going about with an abstracted, uplifted air, as one in possession of some joyful secret. He and Loyola went out early next morning to Mass as usual. Xavier muttered something about a touch of fever, and indeed his white face and heavy eyes spoke of something amiss. At dinner in the college refectory he and Xavier sat near one another as usual, and absorbed in his own affairs as Xavier was, he could not but be aware that Pierre's plain, peasant face was shining.

“ In love, Pierre ? ” he asked, as they left the room together, with a poor attempt at gaiety.

"In love? Yes, señor, yes," he answered, with the same uplifted, joyful look. "Señor Francisco," he went on eagerly, "let me tell you my joy! I have long wanted to tell you, but found no opportunity. But I must speak, though you may not understand. But not here," as he saw that he was attracting attention. "Come!" and he led him out into the street. They went a few paces in silence; then Favre burst out again.

"In love I am, truly, though not with a mistress such as you fancy. How can I tell you?"

He looked round, as if to find some help in expressing himself, and his eyes lighted upon the worn figure of the Divine Child in the Mother's arms near to which Xavier had read his letter the night before.

"I have offered myself—my life," he said softly, joyously, "to—to——" His eyes were upon the crumbling figures.

Francisco was silent a moment; then he spoke in a would-be careless tone:

"I knew Don Pilgrim would have you, Pierre. Oh, you are not the only one. I have heard their talk; I know what they say. He is founding a new Order, or would if he could, when already we are overrun with monks and religious, black, white and grey. Oh yes, I know, I know; it is to be all simplicity and zeal and fervour; it is to cleanse the Church and confound heretics, and to plant the Faith in Cathay and the Indies——"

"Stay, señor, you run on too fast," protested Pierre, gently as usual, but stirred for once out of his customary quietness. "As for an Order, that may or may not be; but if there is an Order it would not be as the others, but rather we should be as the military companies, pledged

to serve wherever and in what manner soever the need should arise ; we should be, as it were, the Free Lances, the *condottieri* of Christ. Do you take my meaning ? ”

“ Dreams, my friend, dreams : they will come to naught,” said Francisco impatiently. “ They seem to make you happy, however,” he added a little enviously.

“ One cannot but be happy,” said Favre slowly, “ when one has offered all—everything—to do—to bear—to go anywhere—do anything. All else seems dust and ashes now. *What shall it profit a man— ?* ”

He was speaking more to himself than to Xavier, who, however, turned hastily away, and with some muttered excuse hurried on, back to the College. At the gateway one of the inevitable beggars, a well-known mendicant of peculiar repulsiveness, plucked at his gown.

“ Alms, *mon maître*, for the love of heaven,” he whined.

Francisco snatched away his gown in quick disgust. Physical wretchedness was always repellant to his beauty-loving, aristocratic senses. He flung him a small coin, however, as he hurried on through the gateway.

He did not return to his room till nightfall, and when he did so found it empty. With a weary gesture of relief he sat down, his elbows on the table, his head on his hands. So, half an hour later, Loyola found him.

He did not stir as Señor Ignazio came in, and his attitude did not invite any approach. But Loyola went forward, laid one hand on his shoulder, and said with quick, authoritative tenderness :

“ Tell me.”

Francisco did not raise his heavy eyes, but to unburden himself was a necessity.

“ My mother is dead,” he said in a stifled voice.

Loyola sat down beside him. For some moments he did not speak or move. At last he said in a tone that expressed far more than his words :

“ Señor, I can say nothing. But, believe me, I grieve for you,” and he stretched out his hand.

Xavier clasped it gratefully.

“ Thank you, señor,” he said unsteadily, and that was all.

A moment later they were disturbed by the entrance of Miguel with candles, and their hands fell apart. Not before the serving-man had marked their attitude, however, though both were too much occupied to see the glare of intense hatred he cast towards Loyola as he went out.

It was a wild, wet night. The rain lashed against the windows, and the wind wailed along the stone corridor. The usual night noises, tipsy laughter and hoarse singing, and the metallic call of the night-watchman came up at intervals from the street below. Francisco lay awake, picturing in his restless grief the old life at Xavier Castle, where he had been for so many years the sole companion of Doña Maria in her poverty and widowhood ; reproaching himself for infrequent letters, and extravagances which might have caused her anxiety and extra privation, almost fancying in the first shock of self-accusation that he had been the cause of his mother's death. Whenever he closed his eyes it was to see her before him, gentle and dignified in her black robes and widow's veil, her sad face turned towards his. It was seven years since he had seen her, but never in his most reckless moments had she been far from his thoughts. He had liked to fancy how proudly her face would glow at the news of each of his triumphs. In his dreams of the future he had

always returned to her, loaded with honours, to share them with her and to receive her blessing. Though far from despising the society of such ladies as he chanced to meet at the houses of the professors or during his vacations, yet since he had decided to take orders and the thought of marriage was excluded, this half-romantic love for his mother had been a safeguard against the amorous fancies which in his case could not be innocent. He had been her youngest and her best beloved. Now of what use was his success if there were no one to share it?

“What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world——”

That vexing quotation again. Not only Loyola but Favre also had plagued him with it. And Pierre, whom he had counted as a friend, was far too wrapped in his dreams to notice his sorrow. Loyola alone, in all this howling wilderness of a city, had seemed to understand. He had behaved rudely to Loyola; he knew it. Henceforth he would treat him better.

He half dozed at this point, but roused up suddenly with the feeling that someone in the room was moving. Something seemed to warn him that danger was impending. He lay still, watching and listening intently. It was long before dawn, but a faint, clouded glimmer of moonlight made the objects in the room dimly visible. Straining his eyes he became aware that a figure was standing at Loyola's bedside, and he fancied he caught a gleam of steel.

In one instant he had bounded across the room and dashed the knife from Miguel's hand. The man gave a startled cry, then dropped on his knees in abject terror by the bedside, sobbing out entreaties for mercy.

"By all the holy saints—mercy ! mercy ! I confess—I am a villain—the devil had me ! Mercy, señor !"

The sounds had roused Favre, who struck a light. It fell on the dropping jaw and startled eye of the poor wretch by Loyola's bedside, on Francisco's stern, set face, and on Loyola himself who, raising himself on his elbow, was gazing at his assailant with quiet pity.

"Thank God you are unharmed !" cried Xavier fervently, and once more the two clasped hands.

"Mercy !" moaned Miguel again.

"You deserve no mercy, dog of an assassin !" Francisco was beginning, but Loyola cut him short.

"Let him go—he will do no more harm. Go, Miguel, and leave us."

And as the creature rose awkwardly and stumbled in a dazed fashion towards the door, he added :

"It is just a foolish jealousy working in a distempered brain." Then, after a moment, he added, "I think I owe you my life—Francisco."

A few hours later, when Mass had ended, two men knelt long in silent prayer before the altar of the college chapel. After the stormy night the wind had fallen suddenly, and the morning was mild and very still. The noisy clatter of the departing students, breaking into loud talk long before they reached the porch, was suddenly hushed as the heavy door swung to, deadening the noises in the quadrangle. The altar candles burned on steadily in the quiet gloom, paling gradually as the late-coming daylight crept in through the narrow windows of deep-coloured glass. Loyola and Francisco de Xavier knelt on alone.

They did not meet again until both were returning from the College of Beauvais after one of Xavier's

lectures. For some time they walked together in silence, jostling the crowd of black-gowned students : French, Scottish, English, Portuguese. At last, seizing a comparatively quiet moment, Xavier turned to his companion and said simply and a little shyly :

“ Señor, may I put myself under your guidance ? I desire to submit myself wholly to the Will of God.”

CHAPTER V

A KNIGHTLY COMPANY

MIDWINTER—some five years later, in the plain of northern Italy. The snow drifted in at the windows and doorways, and found its way through the faulty thatch of a ruined convent, which seemed to have been hastily reroofed to form some sort of human habitation. The keen wind swept through the unglazed cells, and along the empty corridors where, here and there a painted figure, a scrap of dim loveliness amid the ruin, still clung to the crumbling plaster. A small log-fire was burning at one end of the bare refectory, which was furnished only with a rough table, a few benches, some platters and a cooking-pot. And here, a little after sunset, a small company sat down to supper by the light of the fire and of a guttering candle.

They were for the most part Spaniards, lean and shabby, as men accustomed to hardship, with faces which showed intelligence and power, and a certain joyous ardour; an ardour which had worn both clothes and bodies thin, and which had already driven them from end to end of Italy in a new and strenuous campaign against the powers of ignorance and evil, and of that wave of unbelief which the revival of the Classics had brought in its wake, an ardour which was to drive them far, and to lead them into strange paths, of which neither they nor their leaders at present dreamed. Such were the men who, in imitation of

the military forces of the time, were beginning to style themselves, "The Company of Jesus."

Ignazio de Loyola, now in priest's orders, took the head of the table, with Pierre Favre, little less retiring and diffident than of old, beside him. An old Italian, feeble and haggard, crouched on a stool close to the glowing logs, and two beggars, not wholly unwashed, but with wolfish, hardly human faces and matted hair, had joined the company at the board, watching the scanty food with gleaming eyes.

The Latin grace was scarcely said, and Pierre Favre had only just risen to carry a bowl of soup to the old man by the fire, when footsteps were heard at the door, and the sound of a gay tune sung in a lusty musical voice rang through the frosty air.

Favre smiled his slow attractive smile.

"Francisco!" he said.

Ignazio de Loyola looked expectantly towards the door, his eyes full of a deep affection.

"The fellow should have been a troubadour," remarked Rodriguez, a Portuguese, with a grave dark face and attractive manners; "he is always singing."

"Or a jester," returned his neighbour, rather drily.

"Since he said his first Mass," said Favre, in his gentle way, "he has been as radiant as a lover. How now, Francisco? Another guest for us?"

Xavier had pushed open the crazy door and was standing on the threshold, supporting in his arms a figure wrapped in nondescript rags, who lay limply in his grasp and seemed to be in the last stages of some wasting sickness. Though conscious, the man did not speak as Xavier laid him with the utmost gentleness on a pile of straw which Pierre hastened to lay for him by the fire.

Such visitors were so frequent that no explanation was necessary. Francisco tossed to Favre a small sack which he had been carrying slung over his arm, and then the once fastidious hidalgo glanced with a passing expression of disgust at his hands and at his dirt-stained cassock, and went out to wash himself at the well.

Returning, he opened the sack which Favre had laid on one side while he attended to the sick man.

"You have not looked at my spoils, Father," he said merrily to Loyola, as he produced the contents of the sack. "I'll warrant you I am the best beggar of you all! Half a loaf, stale, but might be staler. A good dish of walnuts, a mess of broken meats with which I'll make you a stew to-morrow fit for a cardinal's table. Father," he added, with a mischievous side-glance at Favre, "you had better appoint me cook to-morrow, instead of that wool-gathering fellow. Last time he burnt the pottage so that not the hungriest of pigs could have eaten it."

Pierre protested, laughing. The rest joined in with reminiscences of their own begging adventures. Xavier made the sign of the cross and sat down.

"And how went the preaching, Francisco?" some one asked him.

He smiled quaintly, while yet his eyes glowed at the recollection.

"There was a motley crowd," he said, "in the marketplace. There is a mumming preparing, or a fair, and they were swarming in like flies. I begged a three-legged stool from a cobbler's shop and stood up to preach to them. I preached in French, in Spanish and in Latin, garnished with such Italian phrases as I could remember. I'll warrant you it was a preachment!" His eyes winkled with laughter. "I got a cooking-pot at my head, but

it missed fire, and I think a few mutton bones and eggshells came after it. But at the end they were quiet enough, and," he added softly and gravely, "when I had ended one man asked me to confess him, and a woman besought me to come again. It was she who told me of this poor fellow left deserted in a hovel," he added, and then sat silent, meditatively munching black bread.

Supper ended, the brothers gathered round the fire for an hour's recreation, while the guests, warmed and fed, lay snoring on the straw. Ignazio de Loyola drew Francisco apart towards one of the empty, ruined windows, through which they could see the rising moon above the walls and roofs of the city of Vicenza.

"There is a packet come to-day from Paris," he said. "This," handing him a sealed letter, "is for you; sent from Navarre to Paris, and thence despatched to us with a letter from the Rector of Ste. Barbe."

Xavier opened it and unrolled the long, carefully inscribed parchment.

"What is this?" he said in a puzzled tone. "It is no letter: it has a legal look. Ah!" He flushed with a sort of shame as the meaning of the crabbed Latin handwriting flashed upon him.

"We declare the said Don Francisco de Jasso has duly proved that he was and is by ancient origin and descent in direct and legitimate line through parents and ancestors, according to the four branches of his paternal and maternal ancestry, a hidalgo, nobleman and gentleman——"

He crushed it in his hands. It was the certificate of his nobility, for which he had written to Navarre from Paris some years before, but which had not reached him until now.

"I have no use for this," he said with a little shame-faced laugh, "so here it goes," and tearing it in two with great vigour, he stepped into the circle by the fire and dropped the offending parchment into the midst of the glowing logs. Then, with an air of relief, he returned to Loyola, who was standing by the window with the Paris letter in his hand.

But the elder man seemed in no hurry to speak. He looked first at the letter, then away at the pale moonlit sky through the broken stonework. His eyes seemed to avoid Francisco's gaze.

"Maître Gouvea writes," he said at last, "that he has of late been in correspondence with the King of Portugal, and that His Majesty desires to send a mission to his colony in India. He believes there is much fruit of souls to be gained there, and that it would be for the increase of our holy Faith. He asks for three of our Company."

Francisco's eyes shone.

"You know, Father, what my desire has been. Since it may not be the Holy Land, what could be better than the Indies? If you think me worthy, here am I, ready to sail."

The Indies! east or west, it mattered not. Since the first project, the conversion of the Holy Land, had proved impracticable, the fever had grown upon him to spread the wonder of his newly discovered joy wherever men lived in ignorance of the glory which was blinding his eyes. He waited impatiently for Loyola to speak.

But Loyola still hesitated. His eyes were upon the distant walls of the city, but seemed to be looking beyond them, and when he spoke it was with manifest difficulty.

"You know what this voyage means, Francisco? Of those who set forth, it is not all who arrive."

He might have added that out of the fleet which sailed yearly from Lisbon a large proportion of ships were lost, that fever and scurvy thinned the ranks of those who escaped shipwreck, and that the miseries of a voyage through the tropics could hardly be exaggerated. He might have said, too, that the reports which had reached him of the state of Portuguese India were not such as made the proposed mission a hopeful one, and that he had reason to fear that King Joam's zeal was not quite disinterested. But though he said none of these things, some of them at least Francisco knew.

He did not at once answer. It was his turn to avoid his companion's face.

"I am not thinking of the risks, Father," he said quietly at last. "I should fear only to be negligent in this service, unfit and useless for the increase of our holy Faith. But if I go I shall not return : and you——"

They looked into one another's eyes and read there the pain of the approaching separation. Their hands met.

"Beloved——" began Ignazio huskily. And then, being sixteenth-century Spaniards, they embraced.

In another moment all trace of softness had passed, and Loyola was once more the stern, war-worn general, planning a campaign.

"It may not be yet," said he, "Perhaps not at all. But if you go," he added, in a tone that thrilled the younger man with the sense of a supernatural charge, "*set the Indies on fire, Francisco !*"

CHAPTER VI

BECALMED

TROPICAL night off the coast of Guinea, beautiful and horrible. For weeks past the stars had shone with that same pitiless unearthly brilliance, lighting up the motionless sails, clumsy hull and greasy decks of the *Santiago*. A pale, milky sea stretched motionless around it, except where a shoal of dolphins broke the glassy surface into circles of phosphorescent light. Another ship lay alongside the *Santiago*, while the masts and sails of the rest of the becalmed fleet were dimly visible. And on the deck a group of half-naked sailors gambled and swore and laughed and sang, if only to drown the groans and prayers of their sick and dying comrades below in the stifling hold. They had been becalmed for over a month, and scurvy was rapidly reducing both passengers and crew.

A group of soldiers, "senhores y cabalheiros," far too proud to demean themselves by joining in the sailors' game, lounged over the rail at the deck's edge, idly watching them. On the upper deck, apparently watching them also, stood the Viceroy, Don Martim da Sousa, his immaculate slashed doublet, silk hose and sheathed rapier clearly outlined in the starlight against the intense blue, and with him the Senhor Commandante of the next ship, whom he had honoured with an invitation to dine that night at his table.

A gloomy silence had fallen between the two men, as they listened with lazy contempt to the discordant noises from the lower deck. Don Alvaro d'Ataide da Gama, the commandant of the *San Juan*, a slight, foxy-faced man, son of the famous navigator and explorer, dressed extravagantly in silk and gold lace, was fingering his sword-hilt with nervous hands, glancing now and then a little apprehensively at the bluff, hard-faced Da Sousa, who in his turn scarcely favoured him with a glance. There was no love lost between the two, and Don Alvaro was wondering to what he owed the honour of this invitation. But clearly Da Sousa would choose his own time if he had any communication to make, and the commandant once more turned his scornful glance upon the lower deck.

As he did so a slight active figure in a cassock appeared at the top of the ladder which led down into the hold and crossed over to where the sailors were playing. A roar of satisfaction greeted his appearance.

"Take a hand with us, Father!" they shouted.

The priest hesitated an instant, then appeared to agree and sat down among them. The rough laughter broke out afresh, but somehow the cursing and ribald singing died down. The new-comer seemed to be entering into the game with zest, and some of the soldiers drew nearer to watch his quick movements and deft handling of the greasy cards.

"Your priest seems a low sort of fellow, by the company he keeps," remarked Don Alvaro carelessly, anxious to break the silence. "Why do they send us out more of them? Of course, as a good Catholic I admit we must have priests, but Goa swarms with them already; harmless for the most part, but sometimes meddlesome."

“A low fellow!” repeated Da Sousa with a great, noisy laugh. “Why, my worthy friend, you must beware what you say. We are very proud of our saint on the *Santiago*” (his tone was slightly satirical) “and Fray Francisco and I are on excellent terms. He spends all his days and most of his nights among those poor devils in the hold; faugh! the smell of the place sickens me. And as for the sailors, he had them all on their knees last night and singing psalms. Oh, he is a holy man; yet I fear that in India—if ever we come there alive, which is much to be doubted—he may be—a nuisance.”

Don Alvaro chuckled grimly.

“A nuisance,” repeated Da Sousa. “He is welcome to baptize as many Indians as he pleases; it is doubtless a Christian and charitable proceeding. But these holy men are apt to interfere with things which do not concern them.”

“That is what I say,” broke in Alvaro, delighted to find himself for once in agreement with the Governor. “If we take the True Faith to India, are we to get nothing in exchange? Is not the gold they offer to their abominable idols of more use in the pocket of a Christian cavalier? And why make a fuss about a wretched girl or two? By my faith! are there not plenty of them? Should they not be honoured by the attentions of a Portuguese gentleman?”

“Oh, I am all for converting the Indians and visiting the sick and all that,” returned Da Sousa, rather vaguely, evading the last remarks. “But we have a right to take what we want of them: i’faith we risk enough! This voyage is simply hellish, the worst ever known, the Senhor Capitano tells me. If he had listened to me, the fool, we should not have been becalmed. If the wind

change not we shall all be dead of scurvy before we sight Goa." Then he turned suddenly to his companion and asked pointedly :

" Senhor Don Alvaro, does your brother know of my appointment ? "

Alvaro turned a shade pale, even in the starlight. Some such question he had feared. His brother, Pedro da Silva da Gama, was at this time the Governor of the Portuguese colony in India, and Da Sousa had been appointed to supersede him. That Da Sousa suspected him of plotting with his brother to have the appointment withdrawn he well knew, and if anything could be proved against him he was utterly in Da Sousa's power. He knew well what that would mean—disgrace and irons : and he was proud.

" Why, no, no, senhor ; how should he know ? " he stammered, thrown off his guard by this sudden question.

" I do not know how he should know," rejoined the Governor bluntly. " All I can say, Don Alvaro, is this : if he does know it will be the worse for you. A murrain on that cook ; it is surely time to sup," he added, as though, having delivered his ultimatum, there was no more to be said on the subject. " This plaguey heat takes away a man's appetite, especially for such wretched victuals as we get now. But we have some good wine, senhor," he added amiably, " as you will see."

He turned and led the way down into his cabin : a narrow, airless room, but richly upholstered and brilliantly lighted with candles. The supper was spread on a polished table with silver dishes and tankards. Next the door the Governor paused, having caught sight of Fray Francisco, who, the game of cards being finished, was on his way to the upper deck.

"Will you not dine with us to-night, Father?" asked Da Sousa, in his bluff, friendly way. "No use to starve yourself, you know. We shall all die sooner or later, but we may as well live while we can."

"Thanks, senhor, I have done very well: I am tougher to kill than you think," laughed Xavier. "But I will, with your permission, take my portion of wine for a sick passenger I have got in my cabin. I think he may recover."

"Ay, in *your* cabin," returned Da Sousa with a sort of teasing admiration. "And where do you sleep, Father? On a coil of rope, they tell me. A plague on that boy! What are you doing?"

A thin, wretched ship's boy, tottering weakly in with a dish of soup, had slipped and fallen, spilling the soup on the polished floor of the cabin. Alvaro d'Ataide, still smarting under a sense of injury and in mortal fear from the Governor's threat, turned in sudden anger to strike the boy, but Xavier quickly intercepted his hand, and received a stinging blow on his own arm.

"Hold!" he said, his eyes alight with anger. "You do not strike that boy. He is sick."

Alvaro turned on him, foaming with fury.

"What right have you to question me, dog of a priest?" he snarled. "I am the Governor's guest; I will brook no insults. If you were a layman you should answer for this; ay, and you shall answer for it," he muttered darkly. "You are in league against me," he went on, losing all control over himself, "you and the Governor, and you shall pay for it."

The boy, trembling in every limb, was crouching close to Xavier, clinging to his cassock. Francisco's arm was round him protectingly while Alvaro was speaking.

Without replying he turned and left the cabin, half-supporting the boy, who could scarcely stand. The voices of the two men, Alvaro and the Governor, broke out in angry altercation as they passed out of the door.

Day followed day with ghastly monotony. Not a breath stirred the heavy sails, not a shadow of mist veiled for one instant the scorching glare. In the dark hold, in an atmosphere of inexpressible foulness, dead and dying were herded together ; and day after day the bodies of the dead were hastily lowered into the oily sea, the very sight of which was a torture to the parched throats of men whose only drink was ship's beer and a little putrid water. Of the three priests who had set sail from Lisbon in the *Santiago*, two were helpless with fever, but day and night the cry from the tortured wretches was always for Fray Francisco. He alone could persuade a sick man to take the unsavoury food upon which, nevertheless, his life depended ; he alone could bring the faintest ray of hope into that pit of horror as he passed up and down between the prostrate figures, cheering one, confessing another, commending a parting soul, or praying beside the dead. And he alone of all the ship's passengers and crew could still jest, when misery had stifled even the ribald laughter of the gamblers on deck.

The change came suddenly, with storms and bitter cold, increasing rather than relieving the miseries of the sick crew. The boy had died long before. But at length one morning, after a wild night in which most of the passengers had given themselves up for lost, the Senhor Capitano, looking out over the vista of flying clouds and boiling grey water, remarked to Xavier with grim jocularity :

“ Thank the saints, we've weathered it. I thought

at one time you were a Jonah, Father, and was looking out for a whale for you, but now I think you've brought us luck. In a day or two we shall sight the Cemetery." They had passed the Cape.

A few days later a battered ship with a very reduced crew put into the harbour of Mozambique, known to the Portuguese as the "Cemetery," so many reaching it only to die. At Mozambique the news spread rapidly through the fleet that the commandant of the *San Juan* had been arrested by order of the Viceroy, on the accusation of having conspired with his brother in India against Da Sousa's appointment, and that Da Sousa was taking him to Goa in chains. But there was too much illness among the crew for even this to cause much excitement. The hostel for sick mariners and passengers which overlooked the harbour was filled at once; and while the *Santiago* was obtaining fresh supplies of water there was no rest for Fray Francisco as he passed to and fro between the long rows of mattresses in the cool wards of the hostel, where plentiful fruit and water were already bringing new life to the stricken men. On the fourth day he himself was lying, weak and unresisting, in a white-washed cell overlooking the burning sea, with the shadow of a palm tree flickering across the floor.

As soon as his strength permitted he asked for writing materials and wrote a letter, to be sent by the next ship returning to Portugal.

"From Lisbon I wrote you on my departure, most dear Father, of all that happened there. We left on the 7th of April. All of us were sick for a month or so, and we suffered much annoyance forty days on the coast of Guinea through great calms."

The quill dropped from his thin hand, and he sat looking out to sea, his still young face worn and hollow and lined with the marks of horror he had but just passed through, while the scenes he had witnessed on the *Santiago* moved again before his eyes.

Should he write more? No; what need to write of them? That time was passed.

"Our two brothers," he wrote, "have been sick also, but are mending. The weather was against us, but God our Lord was pleased to show us great grace, and brought us to an island, where we are at the present day."

Again the quill paused. Had the weather only been against him? Should he mention the doubts of the sincerity of the new Viceroy's professed zeal for the Faith, which were beginning to assail him? No; Da Sousa still treated him with the utmost friendliness, and it might be that his suspicions were only the product of a tired brain. Should he mention the fact, of which he was certain enough, that he had an implacable foe in Don Alvaro d'Ataide, who had never forgiven the episode of the ship's boy? True, the Viceroy had put Don Alvaro under arrest, and was taking him in irons to Goa, but this did not improve the situation, as Xavier well knew that Alvaro suspected him of a hand in this summary treatment and would avenge the slight as soon as his sentence expired and an opportunity occurred. Yet why trouble his brothers in Europe with possible fears and dangers? He would not mention it.

Bending over his quill again he wrote rapidly for a few minutes, describing his days in Mozambique and his plans and aspirations for the work in India. Then he drew from an inner pocket a folded sheet, looked at it

with eyes full of rather hungry affection, and gravely kissed it.

“Let me tell you,” he wrote, “what I have done, so that I may never forget you. From the letters you wrote me, which I received at Lisbon, I have cut out, dearest brothers, as a continual and special remembrance, and for my great comfort, your names, written by your own hands, and these I always carry about with me, for the comfort I get from them. And your own above all, tenderest Father of my soul. Now, since we shall see each other in the next life more restfully than in this, I say no more.

“Your least and most exiled son,

“FRANCISCO.”

“Mozambique, 1st Jan., 1542.

CHAPTER VII

TWO SONS OF VASCO DA GAMA

GOA, "golden Goa," the island capital of Portuguese India, slept under the midday sun. There was no stir among the broad, shady leaves of the palm groves, nor any movement on the burning surface of the harbour blue. The Bazaar, with its shaded stalls of porcelain and silk, pearls and spices, a very emporium of Eastern wealth, was deserted by all but its drowsy Arab and Hindu vendors ; the blazing slave-market was empty ; the gambling saloons were half asleep. The noonday hush had filled the shady spaces of the cathedral, richly sculptured without and gaudily draped within, in accordance with the vivid tastes of a semi-Oriental community. The heavy scent of incense stole out and mingled with the noxious smells of the back streets, where a starving and filthy half-caste population, stretched on doorsteps and in the shadows, forgot its woes in sleep.

In the wealthy quarter, where large stone houses, set in palm groves, overlooked the harbour, there reigned the same luxurious stillness. The Viceroy's house, surmounted by the flag of Portugal, rose above the rest. Near it, almost hidden by feathery palms, stood a low stone bungalow painted in white and red, with wide, carved balconies, their stone lattice-work filled in with

finely polished oyster shells. This was the private residence of the late Viceroy, now superseded, but still waiting in Goa for a ship to convey him to the scene of his new appointment as Governor of Malacca.

Pedro da Silva da Gama, elder son of the great navigator, was lounging over the stone rail of the balcony, looking out to sea, sometimes turning to make some casual remark to his half-brother, Alvaro d'Ataide da Gama, who was lying stretched on a couch in the shadow behind him, fanned by a slim Hindu slave-girl, and only rousing himself enough to sip the wine which stood beside him. Don Pedro was a thick-set, low-browed, soldierly man, with an honest face and a simple manner of speech. He had been accused of nothing worse than a lack of firmness in dealing with the natives, and of failing to fill the coffers of King Joam at the desired rate. Don Alvaro, on the other hand, had but just served his term of imprisonment, due to the new Viceroy's suspicion of underhand dealing to overthrow his appointment. He had now, as a mild form of banishment, been appointed to the command of the dreary wastes of Cape Comorin, and like his brother was awaiting a ship and a favourable tide to convey him to the Cape. Disgrace, imprisonment and a rankling sense of injury had not improved the expression of the thin, foxy face and near-set eyes, but he wore his silk and gold lace with the same fastidious care.

"I shall be glad enough to be out of Goa," remarked Don Pedro presently with a touch of scorn in his voice. "The place swarms with these upstart nobodies of common blood—wine-merchant's sons and the like—who in Portugal would know how to treat a gentleman; but here they call themselves Don, give themselves intolerable airs and deck their mistresses with jewels.

Besides, there's no justice nor honesty left in the colony. A man may be a murderer and what not, but his money buys him off. An honest man who serves the King faithfully is likely enough to end in a poor-house. Our father, now, served the State as few have done, yet he died a poor man."

Alvaro's only response was a languid and mirthless chuckle, as though he found the corruption of the Government mildly humorous. But Pedro's indignation felt the need of a vent, and he went on, more to himself than to his brother.

"Da Sousa, now, our new Viceroy. I've no grudge against the man for my own part; he is welcome to my post, for I'd had enough of it. But at least I thought him honest and better than the rest. He makes a show of piety, visits the sick and all that, but that raid on a temple last week and the murder of all those wretched Hindus—it made my gorge rise. We've no right to treat these natives worse than cattle. We shall bring a curse upon the place, if it is not cursed already."

Again the mirthless chuckle from Don Alvaro, but this time he roused himself to languid speech.

"Being heathen, and therefore damned, why worry about them? Try one of these pineapples."

Pedro scarcely heard him.

"Heaven knows I am no saint, but I always stood for fair play. There have been Viceroys, one or two, whose word was trusted by natives and Portuguese alike, who respected women——" He broke off, frowning. "My own wife," he added, "has Indian blood in her, but at least I see to it that she is treated as the King's subject and as the wife of Pedro da Silva. At least, I have not a harem."

He had almost forgotten his brother, but Alvaro reddened angrily and hastened to turn the subject.

"Fetch me some more wine, girl. These shipping delays are lucky at times. I've no inordinate craving for the pleasant shores of Cape Comorin. They say it is a naked desert peopled with savages. But the pearl fisheries are profitable, or at least I can make them so," he added with grim meaning. "And in a few years I shall return to Portugal."

Don Pedro was silent for a few minutes, still brooding over the state of the Colony. Then, as if struck by a new thought :

"Cape Comorin ? At least you will have the society of one gentleman there : Fray Francisco de Xavier."

A curious look came into Alvaro's close-set eyes, but he only said idly :

"Is he there ? What do *you* know of the man ? "

Don Pedro rose from his lounging position and stood erect, looking meditatively out to sea.

"I met him here," he said at last.

"Well ? "

Don Pedro seemed to have some difficulty in saying more ; once or twice he seemed about to speak, but checked himself. When he did speak, his tone was almost apologetic.

"I must admit," he said, "that I was not prepared to think much of him. He came to this house, I believe, begging, on the ground that some parts of the town were starving. As a matter of fact, they generally are. I did not see him, but I sent him out a few ducats and referred him to the Viceroy. It was Da Sousa's business, not mine. And I had seen enough of begging friars and such-

like ; their holiness does not go much deeper than their habits as a rule. And so I should have forgotten the man, but his name teased me at every turn, until at last I asked my servant to point him out to me if we chanced to meet him about the town. He pointed him out to me—where, think you ? ”

Alvaro's only answer was a yawn, but his eyes were alert.

“ It was on the sea front. You know that drunken gamester who was there to-day ? I'm no saint, as I said before, but that fellow ! He hasn't a shred of decency, and comes of as mixed blood as any in Goa calling himself a Portuguese. He was at one of the gaming tables with others of the same crew, and seated at cards with him, who but Fray Francisco de Xavier ? ”

Alvaro's thin lips curved with evident enjoyment.

“ Fray Francisco is much addicted to the game,” he said. “ I had the honour to see something of him on the voyage. It might sometimes be amusing to hear what really brought these holy men from Europe ; not *only* zeal for the conversion of the Indies, I take it.”

But Pedro, who both thought and spoke slowly, hardly noticed the sneer.

“ I said to Gonsalvo, ‘ *That* your saint ! My good fellow, he's just like the rest of them.’ But he only shrugged his shoulders and said, ‘ Your Excellency will see.’ ”

Alvaro yawned again and made a sign to the slave-girl to continue to fan him.

“ I watched the man,” went on Don Pedro, in the same slow, ruminating way, “ and when the game was finished I felt curious to see where he went, so I dismissed my

servant and followed him. He did not return to the town, but made for the palm-grove yonder, which you can just get a glimpse of beyond the houses. He did not seem to notice that I was following him, and after a while among the windings of the paths, and where the tree-ferns grew thickly, he gave me the slip. I thought myself a fool for my pains, wasting my time there among parrots and monkeys, and all out of curiosity about a dissipated friar, when, at a turning, I chanced upon him. He did not see me. He would not have seen a dozen of us." He paused rather shyly, then blurted out, "The man was praying."

The slight cold mockery in Alvaro's "Ah!" was not this time quite lost upon Pedro.

"I tell you," he burst out, growing suddenly angry, "the man was seeing visions, saints or angels or I know not what. You may sneer as you like, Alvaro, but the city was more decent when he was in it. I don't know whether this college of his may turn out a few more of his sort; if so it might do something to cleanse this pigsty. And the man is a gentleman: he is of the best blood in Navarre and lectured at the University of Paris. I saw him several times after that, and to hear him talk takes one back to the old country and to the society a man never meets here. When you have finished with him at Cape Comorin," he added, more thoughtfully, "I shall persuade the Bishop to send him to Malacca. Plenty of savage islands to attract him there, vile climate and noxious beasts," he went on with a sort of amused admiration, "and at least I should have some one besides half-castes to talk to."

Alvaro stretched himself luxuriously on his couch and sipped his wine with great deliberation.

“ When I have finished with him at Cape Comorin,” he said at last, “ I *will* let you know. I will certainly—seek him out. As I told you, I had the honour to voyage with him. To meet him again will be a pleasure, a pleasure,” he added, licking his lips.

CHAPTER VIII

AMONG THE PEARL-FISHERS

AND meanwhile, to and fro across the scorching sand of the Cape Comorin coast, from one mud-baked, grass-thatched group of hovels to another, mile after mile on his bare, sandalled feet, with only a tattered parasol, to protect his head from the deadly heat of the sun, a young man was travelling in the borrowed robe of a Hindu fakir, singing and laughing, full of a joy that could not be suppressed.

They told strange tales of him, these people of the pearl fisheries, as they squatted in groups at their hut doors after sundown, drinking *arrack* and singing tuneless melancholy chants to the accompaniment of their one-stringed instruments. Until his coming they had always lived in fear; fear of the demons who lurked round every corner, who creaked and groaned on windy nights in the palmyra palms, haunted every pool and every tree, ready to scourge them with disease and death; fear of the Arabs who had come some years before in their great ships, burning and killing: fear of the stronger tribes to the north who lived among hills and forests and had been wont to swoop down upon them in search of pearls and of wives. And of late there had come a still more terrible fear, fear of the white men from Goa, and of the white Governor who had his dwelling at

the Cape, who rode great earth-shaking, fire-breathing horses, such as had never before been seen in those parts, and who sent his emissaries to the Parava villages to demand pearls, pearls, and always more pearls, and who punished any disobedience with the lash and with the sword.

But now that he had come amongst them, this godlike stranger, who shared their hovels and ate their food, and lived amongst them as a brother, all these fears had vanished. He, too, was a white man, but he was not as the others ; doubtless he was half divine. He had come with a message from the great Viceroy who lived at Goa, that neither Arabs, nor the tribes of the north, nor even the white men should harm them, that their rice crops should be safe from raiders, and that only a fixed number of pearls should be required by the Governor at Cape Comorin. And they believed and trusted him with utter childlike trust, and crowded after him wherever he went. He brought, too, a message from the Great Father of Spirits, that if they would listen to his words and follow his ways, the demons should not harm them.

To the old men these words were hard, very hard to understand, but it was good that he should take the babies in his arms, and sprinkle them with magic water, that the demons might be driven from them ; good that he should gather all the boys round him and teach them all the words of this Way. And if some of his requirements were not easy, viz. that they should wash their bodies, and not lay hands on their neighbours' goods, and refrain from drinking *arrack*, at least the young ones might do so, and the " Great Father," as they named him, would not be too hard upon the old. And so there was

great rejoicing in the Parava villages in these days, and much thrumming of tuneless chants on the one-stringed banjos.

One thing he demanded of them, and they obeyed him, at first tremblingly, but afterwards with confidence ; it was that they should overthrow and burn every one of the little bloodstained "spirit-houses" in which lived the sacred black stones, the spirit-mothers, goddesses of plague and small-pox, guarded by painted demon-warriors, to whom the black goats had been offered in sacrifice year in, year out, since the days of their fathers.

At first the old men and women tore their mud-caked hair, and prophesied darkly that the goddess mothers of the village would send the cholera, or cause the rains to cease, in revenge for these indignities ; but when the rice crops flourished and no cholera came, the Great Father was regarded more than ever as a god, and the goddess mothers were feared no more.

And instead of the spirit-houses, he required, in every village through which he passed, that a praying-house should be built and thatched, with a cross of white wood fastened above the door. When he came again he gathered the village round the door of the praying-house to listen to his words, he and the two young Tamils who accompanied him, and who acted at first as his interpreters, until they could understand his strange speech without difficulty. They knew that he would spend most of the night in the praying-house on his knees, and that at the earliest streak of dawn there would be lights burning there, and strange low singing and the sound of a little bell. But into these doings they dare not peer too far ; only the baptized boys and girls might

be admitted, kneeling awestruck upon the mud floor, before the mysteries of the Mass.

It was to one of these coast villages that Fray Francisco had come, across the waves of burning sand, and through a dusty monsoon wind, one evening a little before sunset ; a village in which he was already well known, so that the door of his hut was quickly crowded with wondering faces and greasy brown limbs. Cristoforo, one of the two young Tamils who had come with him from Goa, had brought him a meal of badly cooked rice and tepid water, and would, if allowed, have driven out the swarming children who, dressed solely in a wisp of rag or string of oyster shells, pressed round him, fingering his robe and even climbing on to his knee. The meal over, he himself, amid peals of laughter, drove out the smaller children, who continued to peer through the crevices of the hut ; and the two Tamils stood sentinel at the door, admitting only the boys for the lesson he never failed to give at each village in which he slept. With many a laugh at his own faults in Tamil the lesson proceeded, and then, the sun being near its setting and the time at hand when the demons in the palmyra trees were wont to take their evening prow, he, at whose order the goddesses and their monster guardians had been demolished, summoned all the village to the prayer-house, and, sprinkling the bowed heads with holy water, called for angels and arch-angels to be their protection.

Then darkness fell, and silence, and sleep. But the Great Father sat alone in his hut, writing a long letter to Pierre Favre in Germany, Favre, who was struggling with his indomitable gentleness against the overwhelming forces of unbelief, and almost heartbroken at the shameless lives of the German clergy.

The letter telling him of these trials Xavier carried in an inner pocket, and now as he drew it out and looked at the well-known, scholarly handwriting, time and space melted away, and again he was with Favre in the college chamber at Ste. Barbe.

What would he not have given for Pierre's companionship now? Of the two friends who had accompanied him from Lisbon, one had remained at Goa in charge of the newly founded college, and the other, who had come with him to the Cape Comorin coast, he had dismissed for inefficiency and weakness; so that his position was very solitary. But so it must be, and he and Favre, fighting the same battle, facing the same difficulties, were nearer in spirit than they had been in Paris. Something of this he wrote, then sealed the letter and went out to the prayer-house, where he remained through the long, still hours.

He returned at last, not long before dawn, wrapped himself in his cloak and fell asleep, the sound sleep of utter exhaustion. The Paravas and their needs were forgotten, and he himself was a boy again, hunting with his brothers in the Pyrenean forests, or else he was talking face to face with those his spiritual brothers whom he was to see no more except in dreams. At any rate, Cristoforo, waking for a moment, noticed in the moonlight how peacefully he was sleeping.

Soon after dawn Cristoforo awoke him hastily, his brown face blanched with terror.

"Father! do you hear? What is it?"

Xavier started up and sprang to the door, his own face white with apprehension.

A low wailing sound, rising every moment higher and higher, an anguished, blood-curdling, terrified sound,

and breaking through it the noise of harsh shouting and brutal laughter and a clash of steel. And as Fray Francisco and the two Tamils sprang forward in the direction of the sound, Xavier's foot slipped in a pool of blood. A woman, still just breathing, was lying unconscious on the ground, as though she had tried to drag herself towards his hut, and in her arms a dead baby whom he had baptized the day before.

He was kneeling over her to say a prayer for the dying, the sounds growing ever nearer and nearer and more deafening, when in a moment the tide of horror swept round and engulfed him. A body of Portuguese soldiers in steel caps and leather jerkins, drunken and excited to the pitch of madness, were driving before them the cowering, shrieking Paravas, hounding them from their huts, setting torches to the thatched roofs, flinging aside those who tried to oppose them and leaving them trampled and mutilated in their wake. A moment sufficed to grasp it, and the hoarse cries of " Pearls ! pearls ! Bring out your pearls ! " to explain the meaning of it all.

Xavier was on his feet in an instant, and stood confronting them. His set face and glowing eyes gave him, to their intoxicated frenzy, an appearance scarcely earthly. The foremost of them, who seemed to be their captain, stumbled back a pace or two, and gazed at him with dropping jaw. His fear communicated itself to the others, and one or two fell on their knees, muttering. The Paravas, seizing their opportunity to escape, rushed round Fray Francisco, crying to him for help, clinging to his robe. And he, as if frozen by the horror of the scene, stood silent, one hand raised as if to call down vengeance from Heaven. For a moment the noises were

hushed ; it seemed as though the massacre were stayed. Then a voice, a cold voice, hideously indifferent, broke through the hush.

“ What is it ? On, you cowardly dogs ! A meddling friar ? Leave him to me.”

The next minute they faced one another again, Francisco de Xavier and Alvaro d’Ataide.

“ What, *you* ? ” Alvaro sneered. “ My brother told me I should have the society of one gentleman at Cape Comorin, but I did not know how soon that pleasure was to be mine. It is indeed an unlooked-for privilege.”

He was dressed with the usual fastidious care, in velvet doublet and gold lace, and he removed his broad-brimmed sombrero as he spoke with exaggerated deference, as though meeting an acquaintance in the streets of Lisbon.

“ As for you,” he went on, as Xavier remained silent, his burning eyes fixed upon his opponent, as though he would shrivel his very soul, “ as for you, Father, you look thin ; Cape Comorin is not exactly a health resort. Perhaps you would do me the pleasure of dining with me one of these days, and taking a hand at cards. I seem to remember that you affect the game.”

Still the awful silence, and still the terrible, burning eyes fixed upon him. He laughed a little nervously and looked away.

“ Believe me, Father,” he said with a sudden change of tone, “ these heathen are a lazy, thieving lot. To scare them well, once and again, is the only way to get anything out of them. And the Viceroy *will* have his full complement of pearls, and a poor devil of a Governor has to get them as best he can. Come, Father, if you make an enemy of me, you will repent it.”

Then at last Xavier spoke :

“ I shall accuse you to the Viceroy and also to the King,” he said in a terribly quiet voice. “ If they take no action against you, I must leave you to the judgment of God. Call off your men.”

Alvaro turned away with a sneer and would have endeavoured to brave it out, but the shock of Xavier's appearance had sobered the superstitious soldiery, and although a few were still searching the huts, the rest were hanging about in groups, sullenly waiting for orders, but evidently sated with what they had already done. One, more drunk than the rest, was just emerging from a burning hut grasping a girl by the hair, but at one word from the Father he released her and turned sulkily away.

Alvaro gave the word to march on, bowed with mock courtesy towards Xavier, who was holding a dying native in his arms and did not see him, and in a few minutes the Father was left alone among his dead and mutilated children.

The day of horror passed slowly on, the dead were buried, the wounded carefully tended, the dying comforted ; and towards evening he left the village in the care of his two interpreters and set out on foot for the caves to which a number of the villagers had fled, to reassure them and take them food. About midnight he returned, after a long exhausting climb, his feet bleeding, his torn robe soaked with sea-water. All was quiet in the village, except for the moaning of one or two whose injuries kept them wakeful in their huts. He stopped to speak to these and then went on to the little church.

Dawn found him still there, stretched on the mud floor

before the little altar, repeating almost mechanically the familiar appeal of the Psalms :

“ Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness and in the deep. Thine indignation lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast vexed me with all Thy storms . . . ”

CHAPTER IX

FOUR LETTERS

TWO years had passed, and one of the infrequent mails from the East to Europe had brought two letters to the Court of Lisbon.

“Sire,” wrote Xavier to the King of Portugal, towards the close of a long letter, in which he exposed the maladministration of the Viceroy and of the various Governors, and in especial the action of Alvaro d’Ataide towards the tribes of Cape Comorin ; “Sire, I cannot here say all I know, and I dare not think of all I have suffered and suffer, and with no remedy that I can see, unless Your Highness will bestir yourself on behalf of your poor children of India, to remedy these so great evils. I declare that I would not have written this about the Governors if with a good conscience I could have kept silence. Shall it be said that Your Highness is not powerful in India for the increase of our Holy Faith, but is powerful only for carrying off and keeping the temporal riches of India ? I declare it is almost a martyrdom to look with patience on the destruction of what one has gained with so much labour.

“Be prepared, Sire, for kingdoms and lordships finish and have an end. A new thing it will be and something that never happened to Your Highness before, to find yourself dispossessed at the hour of your death of your kingdoms and lordships, and to have to enter into others,

where this new thing must happen to you, to be sent (may God forbid it !) out of Paradise."

This, King Joam, Most Christian Monarch, renowned for his zeal for the conversion of the Indies, read and pondered, but whether it affected his sleep or his appetite is not recorded.

At the same time Her Majesty the Queen was perusing a letter from the same hand, which caused her alternate annoyance and amusement.

"I, Your Highness' poor servant, having heard when in Lisbon that you were wont to receive the sum of four hundred crowns annually to purchase Your Highness' slippers, and being convinced that it is not always the daintiest of shoes and pantoffles which carry us most directly to Heaven, whither, Madam, I am assured that you desire to go, I, Francisco, would humbly entreat your goodness to bestow a portion of this gold for the work of the Comorin Coast, seeing that you can have no better shoes or pantoffles to climb to Heaven than these Parava children. Confident that you will be glad of such an occasion, I end, kissing your Highness' hand."

Upon reading which Her Majesty frowned, reddened, tittered and finally shrugged her shoulders, as far as her bejewelled ruff would allow.

"The impudence of this friar! Santa Maria! how these holy men do plague one. What business has he with the Queen's slippers? And yet there never was any gainsaying the man: I suppose he must have it."

Still another letter in the same handwriting reached an unpretentious house in the Piazza Margana in Rome: a tall, plastered house with a square, moulded gateway. The man who read it was becoming a well-known figure in the streets of Rome, with his broad sombrero and black

cloak, his distinguished though slightly halting gait, his grave, quiet look and rare smile, and the compelling power of his deep-set eyes. Alone in his study he read the letter through once, twice, three times, and once or twice he sighed.

"I almost despair, my only Father," he read, "for any real chance in India, for the increase of our Holy Faith. Corruption is so usual that no one is at all troubled by it. Every one takes the same road : robbery, licence, murder. For the love of God, Father, send out some man pre-eminent in virtue, that he may arouse my torpor. It is four years since I left Portugal, and all this time I have only got a few letters from you and one or two from the brothers. I know well that you write each year as I do, but I fear me that as I do not get your letters you may not get mine. Your charity would do us a great service if you would write to us, your exiled sons, a letter of spiritual advice, that you might divide with us the riches that God our Lord has given you. For the love of God, write, if it is possible.

"I have received from Don Pedro da Silva da Gama, Governor of Malacca, a letter of introduction to those parts. I think by what I am feeling within my soul that I or some one of the Company will go thither, to open a way. But as yet I am in darkness concerning it.

"So I stop, praying you, Father of my soul, my knees placed on the ground as I write this, as if I had you here, to commend me much in your prayers . . .

"Your least and most useless son,

"FRANCISCO."

"12th December, 1544.

And Loyola, after reading the letter a third time, remained a long time at the window of his bare, white-washed study, before laying its contents before his companions in the recreation hour.

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The Viceroy's prediction had been verified. In India, Fray Francisco had become a nuisance. It was a new and unpleasant experience for him to be taken boldly to task for the faults of his administration by a youthful-looking priest in a cassock of disgraceful shabbiness. Courteous and restrained as Xavier had been during their interview, the man's white-hot indignation on behalf of the helpless natives of the fishery coast could not be hidden, and there was besides a dignity and masterfulness about this high-born Spaniard which put Don Martim da Sousa for the time being out of conceit with himself. And so it was that when he received a request from Pedro da Silva, that he would use his influence with the Bishop of Goa to have Fray Francisco sent to Malacca, he was not slow to accede to it.

While the Malacca project was still undecided, Xavier was visiting the College of St. Paul on the outskirts of Goa, henceforth to be partly supported by the cost of those superfluous slippers which the Queen of Portugal was to deny herself, in order that the slim, black-eyed creatures growing up there might be the slippers with which she should climb the celestial road. The college owed to him its foundation, and it was at first a deep refreshment to his storm-tossed spirit to listen to the lively babel of dialects and languages with which the garden was filled during recreation hours, to walk with the boys in the covered alleys during the hours of heat, or to look

round at the extraordinary variety of type and feature ranged along the tables of the refectory, thinking of the vast possibilities for the future of India and of the unknown further East which was stored within the college walls. But a few talks with the Father in charge of the college renewed his fears and anxieties, as his eager spirit was forced to realize the result of generations of Hinduism, the low moral standard and the prevalence of deceit still to be found even in a place which had already cost him so much labour.

“Who is that boy at the end of the room?” he asked one day at supper-time of Paulo Camerino, who had been his companion on the voyage from Lisbon, and who was now one of the instructors of the college; “the one with a somewhat pale skin and narrow eyes? I have not met with his like anywhere in India.”

“Ah,” responded Camerino readily, “I should have pointed him out to you if you had not observed him. He was a waif, brought by some merchants who trade with the countries further east, and readily given up to us when they tired of him. He seems to us a boy of rare parts, for all he says little, and seldom shows either pleasure or any other emotion. But his memory surpasses any boy in the college, and he can reason, too——. But you shall speak to him yourself.” He broke off, and, as the students were dispersing, he called to the lad in question :

“Antonio !”

The boy, who appeared to be about twelve years old, stopped obediently, raising a pair of intelligent, almond-shaped eyes to the Father’s face. He was dressed like the rest in white linen coat and breeches, and his straight black hair was cut short above the shoulders, but his

ivory-coloured skin, high cheek-bones and curious eyes made him conspicuous among the various Indian types. Fray Francisco drew him apart to the window, and in a few moments had him at his ease.

"Where do you come from, Antonio?"

The boy made a vague gesture towards the east, and answered in Portuguese:

"From the country you call China, Father."

Xavier looked puzzled.

"The name is new to me," he said; then turning towards Camerino, he asked:

"What is this country called China, Paulo?"

"Truly I know not," Camerino answered, "but some say it is the country of the Great Cham, to which Marco Polo travelled, and some say it is the same as Tartary, or what others call Cathay. Who told you to call it China?" he added, turning to the boy.

"The merchant who bought me in Sanchian," the boy answered readily.

"Why did he buy you?" questioned Xavier with interest.

The boy's answer came in an impassive voice, as though he were repeating an old lesson which he had long ago got by heart.

"My father was dead, my mother was dead: my uncle had no use for me, so he took me with him when he sailed to Sanchian, and there he sold me to the men of your country."

"And who baptized you?"

"The merchant," replied the boy, "when he brought me to Goa. It was the Feast of Sant' Antonio, and therefore he is my patron."

Xavier nodded reflectively. "And now, Antonio," he

said, after a pause, "tell me something about your country."

But here the boy became vague and confused. Evidently his early days were a blurred memory of wretchedness and ill-treatment. He seemed to have lived in the streets, and about the customs of his country he could give no clear account. Beyond the fact that it was very great and very far away, he knew nothing.

Had he forgotten the language? Xavier asked him. Not altogether, and he repeated shyly and haltingly a few unintelligible words. But it was evident he was fast forgetting it.

"Listen, Antonio," said Fray Francisco impressively. "I would have you write down anything you can remember of your own tongue, every word or sentence that you know, and put the Portuguese beside it. You must not forget it. Some day it may be that you and I will go there, to open a way for the entrance of our Holy Faith."

An extraordinary change came over the boy's hitherto expressionless face. His eyes were lit up with fear and entreaty.

"The Father must not go to my country," he said eagerly.

"But you would be safe with me," said Xavier kindly, thinking he was recalling his uncle's ill-treatment.

"Yes, *I* should be safe," he replied, still not reassured, "but the *Father* must not go to my country."

"Why not?"

"Because," and the boy sank his voice a little, "the men of my country have a great hatred towards the men of your country, Father; the merchants told me. They put them in prison; they keep them in irons and weigh them down with logs of wood until they die. Sometimes

they put out their eyes, or cut off their ears. There was one I knew, a friend of my master's. He went and landed at Hong Kong, but *he never came back.*" Then, after a pause, he added, still more earnestly, laying his hand entreatingly on Xavier's knee, "The Father must not go to my country."

"We shall see, Antonio," said Fray Francisco, smiling. "At any rate there are other tasks to be done first. But do you write down what I told you," he added, as he dismissed him.

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A year or more later, Loyola received another letter.

"Being greatly perplexed and in much darkness, Father of my soul, I was constrained to go by ship to San Thomé, where I remained five months, occupying myself in praying God our Lord to grant me to know in my soul His most Holy Will.

". . . And now I feel and know that it is His Will that I should go to Malacca. If Portuguese ships do not go this year, then I will go in some heathen or Arab ship. Nay, though no ship at all left this coast this year, and only a *catamaran* were leaving, I would go in it confidently . . .

"At the end of August I hope to leave for Malacca, for the ships which have to go are waiting for that monsoon. And when this is accomplished, and if it be the will of God our Lord, I hope to go to a country called China, whereof I heard at Goa. . . . May we be united in the next life, for I do not know if we shall see one another again here.

"Your least son,

"Goa, 8th May, 1545.

"FRANCISCO."

CHAPTER X

AMONG THE POISONERS

IT was not without reason that the *Islas del Moro*, a group of tropical islands among the Moluccas, to which Francisco de Xavier found his way soon after his arrival at Malacca, were reputed by the Portuguese to be the abode of demons. As he threaded his way on foot through the scarcely distinguishable forest tracks which connected one village with another, an oppressive gloom and stillness hung over everything. The rank, gaudy creepers, hanging in festoons from tree to tree, twisted themselves into uncanny shapes as he pushed them aside from his path. Now and again if the trees thinned for a little space, allowing a far-off glimpse of the sky, the whirring wings and vivid colours of a parakeet flashed through the stillness. Then the trees closed overhead again, so that he seemed to be moving in some dim underworld, peopled with shadows. Once a glittering snake reared itself noiselessly from the path a few yards from his feet, and then slid with incredible swiftness into the gloom of the trees. The air was heavy with volcanic smoke, and a clammy mist exhaled from the rotting vegetation under foot.

He knew, as he pressed on alone through paths never before explored by a European, that the evil fame of Portugal had gone before him, and that the degraded savages who lurked in these jungle villages were notorious

throughout the Moluccas as cannibals and poisoners. Nevertheless, the cloud of hopelessness and sense of failure which had oppressed him in India had lifted; a sense of fervent happiness filled him to overflowing as he tramped from village to village, sometimes in silence, sometimes singing.

The path at length broadened out into a clearing, cut off by the surrounding trees from every ray of sun, and occupied by two rows of squalid huts thatched with palm leaves. A few piles of blackened sticks showed where a fire had evidently been made for cooking, and at the further end of the huts a heap of earth daubed with whitewash and red ochre, and a tree hung with scraps of rag, surrounded by spears and earthen pots, suggested some form of demon-worship. On a smaller heap of earth in front of the larger heap, a pile of bones, including a human skull, lay bleaching. An indescribably evil smell hung in the heavy air, but there was not the slightest sign of life; the inhabitants of the village appeared to have deserted it, leaving the demons in sole possession.

Xavier stood for a time taking in the scene, then made the sign of the cross, and began to sing.

Softly at first, then louder and louder till the forest echoed back the unaccustomed sound of psalms and canticles of praise.

A face, daubed with paint, degraded, hideous, peered out fearfully from one of the huts. Xavier smiled and made signs of welcome. The head disappeared, only to reappear in company with several others. Presently two or three men, armed with spears, summoned up courage to come to their doors, the women-folk shrinking behind them.

Recollecting the few words he had picked up during his stay in the islands, he began to speak to them, conveying to them as much by looks and gestures as by words, his friendly intentions. A child ran out presently and, attracted by his smiling face, came towards him, a little, naked, dirty child, smeared with mud and paint, its neck hung round with charms. He drew it to him and caressed it. Emboldened by this, two or three other children followed, then the men plucked up courage and came forward, making signs of welcome, and the women peered out from the doors of their huts. And in a short time the whole village was squatting round his feet, pawing at his cassock, fingering his hair, and all talking at once.

Under such conditions it was not easy to pursue a study of the language, but he already knew a few of the sounds and learned the meaning of a few more, the children laughing at his strange words, the older people eyeing him with delighted wonder. Towards sundown they brought him food, at sight of which he realized that he was faint for want of it; a bowl of ill-cooked rice and some kind of half-burnt flesh. He had long ago conquered his repugnance to native food, and accepted the rice readily, but something in the curious appearance of the meat turned him suddenly sick with loathing. The friendly Governor of Malacca had warned him that the people of Moro were cannibals, and that the old people of the tribe were invariably killed for food. He succeeded in hiding his repugnance, however, and continued to eat the rice.

Presently the chief, or headman of the village, distinguished from the rest by a little extra paint, handed him a wooden bowl containing some pale-coloured liquid. Parched with thirst he took it thankfully and was just

in the act of lifting it to this mouth when something in the gleam of the man's eye made him hesitate. In another moment a woman had sprung forward and dashed the bowl out of his hand, spilling the drink on the ground. The chief's long-bladed knife flashed out in an instant, and quivered above the spot on which the woman crouched, passively awaiting her fate. Xavier sprang forward to avert the stroke, and wrenched the knife from the man's hand, but not without receiving a jagged flesh-wound in his forearm. There was a hideous babble of infuriated voices: dark hands seized him and guttural sounds hissed in his ear. He prepared himself to die.

Closing his eyes, he scarcely noticed whither they were dragging him, but presently he realized that he was being bound with ropes and flung upon the earthen floor of a dark, foul-smelling hut. The door was barred, the voices died away, the light failed rapidly, and he was left in darkness and alone.

The black hours crept slowly by. The forest sounds died down, giving way to the thin song of innumerable mosquitoes and the dry rustle of creeping things on the walls and floor. Tortured by thirst, his cramped position and the throbbing pain of his stiffening wound, he lay awake, eagerly longing for the death he expected. The heat was stifling, and now and then a strange volcanic flash lit up the low doorway and mud walls of the hut. Towards morning he grew feverish; and when a sudden babel of guttural voices broke upon his ear, and all of a sudden the hut was full of black faces and greasy limbs, he could not be certain that they were not the faces and voices of a nightmare. He tried to move, but the cutting ropes round wrists and ankles held him prisoner. Yet through it all a keen joy pierced him, as

he hoped for the death-stroke which would bring him his reward.

But it did not come. The faces and voices withdrew and again the hut was empty, though the voices continued at a distance : talking, talking, hour after hour, while he, now fully conscious, lay and waited.

At last at midday they returned, stood round him once more, talking and gesticulating, and then proceeded to cut the ropes. Some superstitious fear held them back from taking his life ; the village council had decided that he was not to die.

He asked for water in a hoarse whisper, and they brought it to him. Summoning all his faculty by a great effort of will he rose to his feet, blessed them, and went on his way.

CHAPTER XI

THE GOVERNOR OF MALACCA

“**F**RAY FRANCISCO in the flesh ! or is it your ghost, Father ? Truly a miracle !” was Don Pedro’s hearty greeting, when Xavier reached the Governor’s house at Malacca a few months later. “Come and dine with me. I have a thousand things to ask you.”

Xavier assented readily. He liked the honest Governor in his leather doublet and plain collar which contrasted so pleasantly with the fashionable satins and laces ; liked, too, the simplicity of his panelled dining-room with its pewter dishes, where one serving-man in dark livery attended at meals, compared with the gaudily frescoed walls and the superabundance of silver and glass in the houses at Goa. But it was not much of the Father’s own experience that Don Pedro could glean from his conversation at dinner, though he was ready enough to describe the customs of the Moro tribes, and to interest the Governor in the schemes for a mission to the Moluccas which he was revolving in his mind. Nor did he mention a month’s enforced stay in the Malacca hospital on his return, necessitated by a severe fever and a neglected wound.

He looked older. His hair, coal-black when Don Pedro had met him in Goa, was now growing grey at the temples, and the outlines of his face had lost their youthfulness. The Governor, noticing this, attributed it all to his hard-

ships in the Moro Isles. He did not know that while in the hospital a letter had reached him telling him of the death of Pierre Favre. After a noble and not unsuccessful fight with the forces of unbelief in Germany, worn out with the unequal struggle, he had lived just long enough to reach the house in the Piazza Margana, and to die in Loyola's arms. The news had aged Xavier more than all his experiences in the islands, but this of course the Governor could not guess.

He was not the only guest. Opposite to him sat a man with a thin keen face and restless eyes, whom the Governor introduced as Don Diego Pereira, a merchant. He seemed from his conversation to be a man who had made several successful adventures, but there was a sincerity about his manner which Fray Francisco, always a lover of his kind, found attractive. He did not, however, enter much into the discussion between Xavier and the Governor until supper was over, and the three men had drawn back their chairs from the table, and were enjoying from an open window the marvels of the tropical stars, and the gleams of phosphorescence that lit up the crowded shipping in the harbour. Don Pedro lit a pipe and offered one to Pereira, tobacco having been lately introduced from the other Indies, so recently conquered, and there was some talk about the merits and demerits of the mysterious leaf. The Governor related, laughing, how his servant had at first been seized with terror at seeing him, as he supposed, on fire, and had rushed off to find something with which to extinguish the smoke. Xavier capped the story with some of the customs of the Parava Indians, and then, after a short silence, he turned the subject to one which at this time was constantly occupying his mind. Could Don Pedro tell him anything

about this unknown country called China? Was it true that the Chinese ships sometimes put in at Malacca? Had any Portuguese merchants succeeded in landing at Chinese ports?

The Governor could tell him very little. There was, he believed, a certain amount of trade with China, and occasionally one of their unwieldy-looking hulks put into the harbour. But they spoke a barbarous and impossible jargon, and he believed that Europeans were forbidden to land on Chinese soil on pain of death. He appealed to Pereira, who corroborated what he said.

"Surely, Father," he added with a friendly laugh, as Xavier sat silently thinking over the information, "India and the Moluccas should be enough to content you. You have scarcely escaped with your life from those poisonous *Islas del Moro*—Isles of the Devil they should rather have been named."

"Say rather," replied his guest with his quaint, half-humorous smile, "*Isles of Hope in God*. I have great hope for the Moro people." Then, with an abrupt return to the former subject, "These Chinese, *senhor*; are they a barbarous people, or are they the race that Marco Polo discovered, skilled in fine arts and full of curious knowledge?"

"That I know not," replied the Governor, "but some of their ways are barbarous enough. What say you, Don Diego?"

"Their silks and porcelains surpass anything I have seen," said Pereira quickly. "I would give much, *senhor*, to open up a trade with China. I have sometimes thought——" He broke off, hesitating.

"What have you thought, *senhor*?" asked Xavier eagerly. His evident interest encouraged Pereira.

"I have sometimes thought," he said, "that if the Viceroy would send an embassy, as from the King of Portugal to the King of China, with such rich toys and costly gifts as would please an Eastern king, he might win from him permission for merchants to land at Chinese ports."

Don Pedro laughed.

"With yourself as ambassador, senhor? You would scarcely get another man to undertake the venture. Beware what you do. If report says truly, there are not a few of our countrymen rotting in Chinese prisons through over-boldness. It would be a fearful risk."

Pereira shrugged his shoulders.

"I care not for the risk. What are we here in the Indies for, but to take risks?"

Xavier held out his hand to him impulsively. The spirit of adventure always found an echo in his own heart.

"I am with you, senhor," said he. "If you go, I will go with you—with *other merchandise*."

"You will neither of you go," said the Governor sternly. "These are mad dreams, and I will not countenance them."

Xavier smiled his quaint, irresistible smile.

"If we were to go, senhor Don Pedro, it is your support I would ask for, and I know it would not be refused."

The Governor's face softened.

"It will come to naught," he said, "or at least I hope so. Stay, I have just remembered there was a Chinaman here the other day, inquiring after you. Or rather, he was not from China itself, but from those newly discovered islands near the Chinese coast: Zipango, or Japan, they call them."

"Enquiring after me?"

"Truly yes, Father. Your fame had gone before you. This young man was a merchant and spoke as good Portuguese as you could wish to hear—courteous too, by my faith! the manners of a prince. When he heard that you had not returned he seemed greatly concerned, and said he was shortly returning to his own country and had wished to see the Great Father of whom he had heard so much. A pity! He must have sailed."

Fray Francisco was eager to hear more. Where had the young man been lodging? On which ship was he sailing? His keen interest and rapid questions rather bewildered Don Pedro, to whom this man's burning desire for spiritual conquests was a perpetual phenomenon.

"Be content, Father," he said at last. "I will make enquiries to-morrow for this fellow in every quarter of this god-forsaken port; if he is within twenty miles I will hear of him. If I did not," he added, as though excusing himself, "I doubt not you would scent him out. Come again to-morrow evening, and if he has not sailed I will summon him here to meet you."

Xavier thanked him warmly, then turned to Pereira, who was rising to take his leave, "And Senhor Don Diego," he said, "do not fail to acquaint me with anything you resolve to do in this matter of an embassy to the King of China. A letter addressed to the College of San Paulo at Goa would reach me in course of time, wherever I might be."

"I will do so," agreed Diego Pereira heartily.

Xavier would have followed him out, but the Governor detained him with a gesture.

"And now, Father," he said, as soon as the merchant had gone, and his manner had become rather shy and

hesitating, "if I search for this barbarian for you, will you do me a favour in exchange?"

"Most gladly."

"Why then," said Don Pedro a little awkwardly, "it is about my wife. She is very melancholy here in Malacca, and, for the matter of that, she was dull enough at Goa. She fancies the other Portuguese ladies despise her. The truth is, Father, though she was as pretty a girl when I married her as any in the Indies, she is not a pure-blooded Portuguese, and she can neither read nor write, and well—she is a faithful creature, but she is not lively company. And since our son died, she has pined and moped."

Fray Francisco had been listening attentively.

"How did he die?" he asked quietly.

"Killed," was Don Pedro's laconic answer, "in an expedition against the Arabs. Our only child," he added, and was silent.

There was a moment's pause. Then :

"I will see your wife," Xavier replied.

Don Pedro assented readily, and led him at once to the lady's apartments. They were furnished with a profusion of rich Indian silks, and brightly lit. A Malay slave-girl was singing a droning native melody, but broke off as they entered. The Governor's wife, a stout, dull-eyed, sallow half-caste woman, was lying on a couch, playing restlessly with her jewelled rings. She was dressed in the extreme of European fashion, in a farthingale of stiff crimson silk, and an elaborate lace ruff, but the lace was crumpled, and there was a negligent air about her whole appearance. A fantastically dressed negro boy was curled up on a cushion at her feet. The Governor presented his wife with his usual courtesy and withdrew.

The lady brightened a little at the sound of Xavier's name, and still more in his gentle presence, and very soon, with the lack of reticence of the simpler races, all her sad little sordid life was revealed to him. Her growing realization of her inferiority, her quenched hopes in her son, who was "quite a Portuguese," her pathetic consciousness that her husband wearied of her, her jealousy of the other women whose company she fancied he frequented ; to all this and more Fray Francisco listened. They were scarcely curable ills, and yet, when he left her an hour later, he left her with some glimmering of hope of reunion with her son, and some dim sense of her own worth and dignity, the worth and dignity of a human soul.

Don Pedro was warmly grateful. "You must see her again," he said. "And now one more thing, Father." He hesitated again. "A man grows lax about his duties in these heathenish places. Will you confess me now, or else to-morrow?"

"Now, if you will," assented Xavier gladly.

CHAPTER XII

THE PIRATE SHIP

DON PEDRO's enquiries about the Japanese merchant brought forth the information that he had sailed for Japan some weeks before, but that a storm had driven the ship back and obliged him to return to Malacca. He was soon found, and summoned to the Governor's house that same evening.

The well-bred Oriental gave no sign of embarrassment at the honour shown to him. Of noble Samurai family (although a younger son whose adventurous spirit had driven him to seek his fortune in trade) Yajiro in his graceful kimono of plum-coloured silk felt himself at least the equal of the blunt-mannered, plainly dressed Don Pedro. And it may be that he was saved from disappointment at sight of the "Great Father" by the important circumstance that the Father's adventures in the Moluccas had necessitated the purchase of a new cassock.

Western only in speech, Yajiro's elaborate courtesies lost nothing by translation into Portuguese, and a good half-hour passed before all the preliminaries of introduction had been concluded. Yajiro was not worthy to sit in the presence of the Great Father and of the noble Governor, rather should he spread himself as a mat for their honourable feet. To which the Great Father was bound to reply that the unworthiness was entirely his,

a speech not altogether strange to one who had learned humility in the school of Loyola. He might have grown impatient at the long-drawn-out exchange of compliments, but for the fact that the manners of Xavier Castle in the days of Dr. Juan de Jasso, his father, had been little less formal and long-winded. It was the courteous East meeting the courteous West, and Fray Francisco's patience received its reward.

For this Yajiro proved to be a young man of keen intelligence and open, enquiring mind, especially on the subject of the new religion, of which he had heard something from the Portuguese captain in whose ship he and his companions had come to Malacca. Moment by moment, as they talked, Xavier's hopes rose higher. Here was no degraded, unlettered savage, nor were these islands of Zipango, or Japan, already estranged by oppression and the evil living of Spaniards and Portuguese. Here was a great race, intelligent, cultured, desirous of knowledge; a citadel worthy to be stormed by the hardy soldiers of the Company of Jesus. And through this Yajiro he might find a way—so his eager thoughts ran on, ignoring obstacles, oblivious of hardships, until in his imagination and to the vision of his triumphant faith, Japan was already won.

"Senhor Yajiro," he said at last, when midnight was long past and Don Pedro, of whose presence neither was aware, was stifling his yawns as best he might; "Senhor Yajiro," and there was in his voice a hint of imperiousness which bespoke the hidalgo of long ago, "this is no chance meeting. You will return with me to Goa."

And to Goa, in fact, Yajiro went.

A year or so later, in the blazing heat of a tropical

June, there sailed from the port of Malacca a Chinese trading junk, a clumsy, gaudily painted concern, carrying a cargo of pepper and spices, in command of the most notorious Chinese pirate of the Eastern seas. Besides its proper cargo it carried a quantity of fowls, herded in noxious filth in a portion of the hold, and sacrificed daily to an impassive-looking, bloodstained image which occupied a place of honour in the vessel's poop. And in the stern, among casks of pitch and coils of greasy rope, a little group of passengers slept, ate, studied, prayed and often laughed and sang for sheer exuberance of spirit, to the mild astonishment of the bequeued and yellow-faced Chinese sailors in their dingy padded garments, who from time to time came and gaped at them through the rigging.

They were nine in number. Foremost, Francisco de Xavier, whose burning soul seemed at times to be almost visible through the worn, transparent flesh. Secondly, Juan Fernandez, a layman: young, aristocratic, ardent, a brilliant linguist who often reminded Xavier of his younger self, and who had but lately come from Europe to join the Society in India. Two other Spaniards, chosen at Goa for this special venture, two Indian students from the college, and lastly three Japanese, of whom the leader and spokesman was the young merchant, Yajiro, now baptized Paolo, or, to give him his full title, Paulo de Santa Fé.

Paulo acted as instructor in Japanese to all except his own two countrymen, who were quiet youths, polite and shy, accepting their curious surroundings and uncertain prospects without much comment. Paulo's progress at Goa had satisfied even Xavier's ardent hopes, and his warm heart went out in unstinted affection to this charm-

ing, gay-spirited Japanese, who made light of hardships, jested at dangers, and could even hold his own with the Pirate Captain, whose incomprehensible Chinese oaths, scarred face and truculent manner were apt to strike terror into the Indian youths. And if there was ever a lurking fear in Xavier's mind that Paulo's conversion had been too easy or his zeal too hot to be permanent, he put it from him or reproached himself for lack of faith. The first of a new race, Xavier's hopes for Paulo were bound up with his hopes for the islands of Japan.

The favourable wind and weather with which they had left Malacca had given way now to heavy gales and high seas, and the awkward craft crept along, pitching and rolling, within sight of the Chinese coast. The passengers, sitting huddled in the stern, were watching the flying clouds with anxious faces.

"I doubt," said Master Diaz slowly, "whether we reach Japan before the winter." He was a quiet person, whose judgment was usually to be relied on.

"If the Captain had but taken advantage of the good weather," returned Xavier with a touch of impatience, "and not wasted so much time among the islands, we should have been much further on our way by now."

"I think," said Fernandez, "that the demon" (glancing as he spoke in the direction of the image in the poop and involuntarily making the sign of the cross) "is advising him not to go on to Japan, but to winter in some Chinese harbour. At least, I gathered so from the talk of that old sailor I spoke to last night."

"Ay," said Paulo, "there was a great sacrifice last night, and more lights and incense than I have seen since we sailed, and casting of lots."

"Lots!" exclaimed Xavier. "Then be sure it is as

you say, Master Juan. Would to God," he added bitterly, his set face revealing the intensity of his desire, "that our reaching Japan were not at the pleasure of the demon and his servants. Ah," he added in a different tone, his face relaxing into a smile, "here is our little maid again. What can she be after?"

The Pirate's daughter, a sturdy, fantastic little figure in silks and beads, regarded by the sailors as the luck of the ship, was by now a familiar sight to the passengers, though the sense of decorum of the three Japanese was outraged by the manner in which this female thing was allowed to roam the decks at will. But the Pirate had no regard even for the etiquette of his own land, and the sailors bought her charms and necklaces at every port at which they touched. Accustomed to regard herself as something like a princess, this little flat-faced maiden had soon signified her approval of them, and had attached herself specially to Xavier, to whom children were invariably attracted.

She had been peeping at them for some moments through the rigging, and now, seeing Fray Francisco's smile, she came towards him in her serious, deliberate way, patted his cassock and seated herself on his knee. He put his arm round her and turned his head away, leaving Fernandez to entertain her in broken Chinese, while his eyes rested on the misty outline of her native coast, inexorably closed against light and knowledge. There was always a sort of sad tenderness in his attitude towards this little doomed creature, as he could not but regard her. The child of a heathen pirate, what hope for her, according to the belief of his age, in this world or the next? But she, quite unconscious of these gloomy considerations, chattered cheerfully to Diaz and Fernan-

dez, sometimes gently pulling Xavier's sleeve to attract his attention towards her rings and necklaces, until a sudden lurch sent the vessel pitching to one side, obliging them to cling to ropes and rigging to avoid being washed overboard.

"The storm is increasing," said Fray Francisco, rising with some difficulty, and still holding the child in his arms. "The little maid ought not to be about on the decks. I will take her to her father."

The Pirate was standing on the upper deck looking out to sea, bawling out orders to the sailors who were hastily reefing the greasy red sails. His face, which had the appearance of dingy yellow leather, was indescribably evil, but he grinned at sight of his passenger with a ghastly amiability, and yelled to one of the sailors to take the child. But the spoilt maiden objected and clung to Xavier, screaming. He attempted to pacify her, but was obliged to relinquish her, still screaming, into the hands of the sailor.

The storm was now very high, the deck rolling and the wind screaming through the rigging, as Fray Francisco returned with difficulty to his companions. Dreary as was the prospect of a night on deck, the prospect of the hold, foul, stifling and evil-smelling, was worse. Just as he was reaching the spot where he had left Fernandez and Diaz, a lurch of the vessel obliged him to cling to the railing, and the same moment a hoarse yell of fear and the thin scream of a child startled him into looking behind him. In an instant he knew what had happened. The little girl had followed him. He just caught sight of the fluttering bundle at the ship's edge before it was swept like a leaf into the deep green trough of a wave below. For the fraction of a second

the small arms fluttered helplessly, and Xavier was almost in the act of springing in after her when the crest of the wave closed over her and she was swept out into the current. At the same moment Fernandez gripped his arm.

"It is useless, Father ; she is gone," he said.

"Ay, she is gone," repeated Xavier in a sad, dazed way, scarcely heeding the hideous wails of lamentation which were breaking out all around him. With eyes fixed on the spot where the child had gone under, he stood praying, his lips moving silently, not perhaps for the soul of the child, since the belief of the time forbade prayer for the unbaptised, though the yearning pity in his heart was not far removed from prayer, but for the innumerable souls in the country beyond the flying mist, whom he burned but as yet almost despaired to reach.

How long he remained there he scarcely knew, perhaps an hour, at the end of which time he became aware that the wind had dropped and the lurching of the vessel was gradually lessening. Dusk was falling, too, so he returned to say vespers with his friends, noticing as he did so that great preparations were on foot for a sacrifice, a quantity of fowls were being hauled up from the hold, torches were flaring and the loud wailing and dreary guttural chanting never ceased for an instant. Away in the stern the little company of nine knelt for vespers in the growing dark, then sat on in silence, listening to the wailing and yelling which reached them in fitful gusts of sound.

"Will they impute this to us, think you ?" asked Fernandez at length, addressing his companions generally.

The only answer came from Paulo.

"They are casting lots," he said, and his lips were dry.

There was a long pause, broken at last by one of the other Japanese.

"Were we not Christians," he said, almost regretfully, "we would commit *hari-kiri* rather than fall into their hands."

"As Samurai should," added his companion approvingly.

Then Xavier, who had been very sad and silent since the child's death, roused himself and spoke with his old persuasive eloquence. How could the demon harm those whose sole trust was in God, for whose love alone they had adventured on this voyage? If they reached Japan, well: if not, they reached a fairer country. He spoke with utter simplicity, but his friends were comforted.

"What is that?" exclaimed Fernandez, as a louder burst of sound, discordant, horrible, was blown towards them. "Look, they are coming this way."

They all rose to their feet, prepared to meet what might be in store. For a few minutes the ship was lit from end to end with fitful torchlight, while the yells and cries drowned even the wailing of the wind in the rigging. Then the torches were flaring round them, lighting up the distorted, frenzied faces and blood-stained knives of the maddened crew.

Speech was impossible. They could only gather that the demon had signified that they were to be held guilty of the death of the Pirate's daughter. That this meant death, swift death, or else a lingering death by torture, not one of them doubted.

The hideous faces were pressing closer, bawling and hissing unintelligible curses; the knives, still dripping with the blood of the sacrifice, gleamed above their heads. As long as he lived Fernandez could remember Xavier's

face, revealed in a flash of lurid light, unearthly in its dignified beauty, as he confronted the hellish crew. Then all was confusion, fierce hands gripped them, bound them, gagged them, and they were flung down, unresisting, into the depths of the hold.

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE HOLD

BUT not for long was the demon allowed to work his will. Two days and two nights of physical misery had passed, relieved only by the peaceful and even merry humour which always characterised Fray Francisco when subjected to any personal humiliation, so that the Chinese sailors, who themselves avoided the rat-infested depths of the hold, were astonished more than once to hear sounds of laughter floating up from below. But by the third day laughter had become impossible. Master Diaz was shivering with fever, and Fernandez delirious from the same cause, while Fray Francisco's time was divided between his attempts to make them a shade less wretched, to cheer the dispirited Indian lads, and to dissuade the Japanese from ideas of suicide. As for Paulo, his cheerful spirits seemed altogether to have broken down under the strain, and he had sunk into complete lethargy, so that Xavier was the more astonished when on the third morning, at the appearance of the one-eyed sailor whose business it was to bring them their scanty rice, he rose to his feet, moving his cramped limbs with difficulty, and with his most stately Samurai air demanded to speak with the Captain.

To the wretched prisoners, crouching in the corners of the hold, the flood of daylight let in upon their total darkness by the appearance of the sailor was always

dazzling, and there was something in Paulo's movement and speech so sudden, vivid and arresting that they gazed at him spellbound. And as he stood in the square patch of light which fell from the opening above, slight and upright in his torn and stained kimono, the one-eyed sailor seemed impressed by his imperious bearing, and with an enigmatical grunt disappeared again up the ladder.

"Have a care, Paulo, what you do," warned Master Diaz with chattering teeth, when darkness had closed over them again.

"Better death than this," the Japanese replied.

An hour passed slowly away and neither sailor nor Captain appeared. They were beginning to think that either the sailor had not delivered the message, or that some new torment was being devised for them, when the hatchway was suddenly thrown up and the unlovely countenance of the Pirate came peering down upon them, his hoarse voice demanding with an oath what it was they wanted.

"Come down and I will tell you," was Paulo's calm reply.

"Paulo, Paulo, this is madness!" groaned Master Diaz from the darkness.

"Madness," echoed the trembling Indians.

The Pirate, considerably astonished, and not without much swearing, was beginning slowly and stiffly to descend the ladder. On one of the lower rungs he paused, leering round at the faces which glimmered at him palely through the dusk.

"What do you want?" he demanded again with a variety of unintelligible oaths.

Paulo stepped forward and confronted him, speak-

ing as rapidly as his defective knowledge of Chinese would allow. What did the Captain mean, worm of a Chinese that he was, by treating passengers in this manner? Did he not know that the honourable Fathers and their honourable friends were well known and highly esteemed by the Great One, His Excellency the Viceroy of Goa? That the great white King of the Christians, to whom His Excellency was but a servant, had many ships and mighty armies with which to avenge any insults shown to his subjects? Did the Captain know, he demanded further, that he, Yajiro, was a near relative of the Daimio of Satsuma, and that as soon as the ship reached Kagoshima, the Daimio would make enquiries as to the passengers on board? That any insult to him, Yajiro, or to any of his friends, would be punishable in Japan by death? That whatever the Captain did to them he could not hope to keep secret, since the crew would certainly make it known in Kagoshima?

The Captain blustered and swore, and once or twice made as if to strike him, but drew back, and at last, muttering something about Christian devils, hauled himself up the ladder again, and once more darkness closed in upon them. For a while they huddled together, listening with strained ears to every sound on the deck above, almost expecting to be confronted at any moment with some fearful form of death. Then quite suddenly the hatchway was thrown open again, and half a dozen sailors, shouting, yelling and brandishing knives, swarmed down the ladder. There was a moment of horror, but Xavier's trained ear had caught one word among the babel of sounds, and his voice rose clear above it.

"They are setting us free!"

It was so. With a rough friendliness the sailors seized

upon them, supporting their weak, stiffened limbs as they dragged them up the ladder one by one into the blazing sunshine on deck. Dazzled, and almost too weak to stand, they clutched at masts and rigging, while sea and sky seemed to surround them in a mist of burning blue. The rough weather had passed.

"Let the Father remember," said Paulo proudly, finding that Xavier was beside him, "that it is I who saved him."

Fray Francisco turned to him with a quick look of distress. This was not the temper he had expected to find in a man miraculously saved from death. A reproof was on his lips, but at that moment an exclamation burst from one of the Indian lads, and as he pointed seaward, Xavier followed the direction with his eyes. Before them, glittering in the intense blue of sea and sky, lay the myriad islands of Japan.

CHAPTER XIV

A ROUGH JOURNEY

THREE men were toiling slowly along a rough mountain track in southern Japan towards the close of a winter day in the year 1549. The path was almost obliterated by the snow, which the keen wind drove in intermittent gusts into the travellers' faces, and a cold fog was slowly blotting out the snow-covered slopes which surrounded them. The two Spaniards wore their ragged cassocks and sandals, little adapted to such a climate, but the elder man, white-haired, but with a face and bearing almost youthful in its vitality, seemed scarcely to notice that his feet were swollen with cold and bleeding from contact with the sharp stones. His eyes were on the distant hills, and his expression absorbed and radiant. The younger man followed without complaint, but glanced at him now and then a little anxiously, or turned with a few encouraging words to their companion, a Japanese lad, who, though his impassive countenance concealed his feelings, lagged now and again from sheer exhaustion.

Once he asked him :

"Do you know this road, Bernardo? Is there a village hereabouts, or an inn?"

But the Japanese, too weary to speak, shook his head and did not answer.

And so in silence they toiled on for another quarter of an hour.

The pirate-ship had reached Kagoshima the previous August, and all through the autumn months the little company had enjoyed the hospitality of Yajiro's father, a courtly Japanese noble, who, with his whole family, had bidden them welcome, and put his house and grounds at their disposal. Master Juan Fernandez, loyal to the heart's core as he was, was recalling these past months rather longingly as he trudged on after his tireless leader through the icy gathering fog. He pictured to himself the spacious rooms, furnished with elaborate simplicity, the gracefully served meals, the shy courtesy and flowery robes of Yajiro's female relatives ; the gardens laid out with the nicest art, where vivid scarlet maples flamed into the blue depths of artificial lakes, and little paths and cunningly contrived flights of steps led up and down between summer pavilions into fresh vistas of the distant sea or of pine-covered hills.

Not that those months had been spent in anything approaching idleness. Unceasing study of the Japanese language was only varied by preaching, with Paulo as interpreter, before the Daimio, in the streets of the town, and in the surrounding country. Fernandez recalled, too, their first official visit to the Daimio's house, when the great man had received them with every sign of honour in his silver-roofed summer pavilion, surrounded by a brilliant company of local nobles. The prospects of success had then seemed almost overwhelming, and a living evidence that they had not been altogether misleading was visible in the boy Bernardo, a young cousin of Yajiro's, whom Xavier had baptized just before they set out on this wintry journey. But even on that auspi-

cious day of their reception by the local prince they had read hostility in the cold eyes of certain orange-robed, shaven-headed men from the surrounding Buddhist monasteries who had stood not far from the Daimio's elbow: and after that it had not been difficult to trace the source of the hideous rumours which had begun to circulate against them, nor the influence which had prompted the Daimio's edict forbidding the teaching of the new Faith on pain of death.

Still, although it was evident that it was necessary to leave Kagoshima, Fernandez could not but question the wisdom of Xavier's fixed determination, in spite of numerous warnings, to reach Kioto in mid-winter, and to win from the Mikado himself, or from the Shōgun, permission to preach in any part of the country. Could they not have remained in one of the southern towns until a more favourable season?

In another moment he was ashamed of his faint-heartedness, for Fray Francisco turned upon him a face so radiant with confidence that it seemed to make a momentary brightness through the gathering fog.

"Do you know, Master Juan, of what I have been thinking? I have been picturing those poor fellows crowding the lecture-room at Paris as we used to do, struggling and striving for they know not what; and wishing that one could lend me wings to fly back there but for a day; for I would burst in upon them like a madman, and shout to them to leave these trivial matters and empty desires and to come and find true joy here with us."

"Yet, craving your pardon, Father," objected Fernandez, smiling a little ruefully, "I doubt whether they would thank you for bringing them here at this moment,

for as far as I can see we are like to spend the night on this most inhospitable mountain."

Xavier, thus recalled to the facts of the situation, laughed at his own expense, and then grew suddenly grave.

"It is so," he said, "and Bernardo is almost spent. Give me some of that baggage you carry in your sleeves, boy : my wallet can hold more. There may be some farm in sight when we have turned the next corner."

"Your feet are bleeding, Father," objected Fernandez, as Fray Francisco proceeded to relieve the boy of his load, "and you are as spent as he is."

Xavier ignored the remark, and with a cheering word to Bernardo continued to lead the way along the narrow track which skirted the mountain slope. He had a convenient trick of deafness when urged to consider his own interests. But the track was growing almost invisible, and the slope on their left hand more and more precipitous, a yawning gulf of darkening fog.

They turned a sharp corner, and far below them twinkled an uncertain light.

"An inn !" exclaimed Bernardo eagerly, and, hope lending him strength, began scrambling down the steep slope, clinging to stones and bushes, in a desperate attempt to reach the valley below.

"Stay !" cried Fernandez. "I am fittest to lead here. Come back, Bernardo."

The boy obeyed. He had given his absolute allegiance to these two, and their word was law to him. And so, for the best part of an hour, they scrambled forward and downward in the darkness, slipping and stumbling, but scarcely speaking a word ; sometimes losing the guiding light, at which times Bernardo would almost despair, but Fray Francisco would grip his arm with :

“Patience ! in a moment we shall see it again.”

They had reached a path at last, but found themselves still at some distance from the light, which, however, came to them in uncertain gleams through the crooked stems of the pine trees through which the path now led ; and by its fitful light they were able to grope their way forward until, faint and exhausted, they reached the door of what appeared to be a lonely inn.

A mere shed it was, with an upward curving roof of thatch, the light of the fire within streaming through the cracks of the wooden walls, a sign-board, which the darkness prevented their deciphering, faintly outlined against the sky. Summoning his remaining strength Fernandez knocked.

There was some rather drowsy talk within, and then the door flew suddenly open, letting out a blaze of light which dazzled the travellers’ eyes for a moment, and revealing a little wrinkled fierce-looking man, with a thin grey beard, and behind him a party of men seated cross-legged on the floor round the fire, playing with dice, and drinking rice-wine. They all turned and stared at the three travellers who stood in the full blaze of the fire-light, wet, weary, ragged and bleeding.

Bernardo, with a supreme effort, stepped forward as spokesman, bowing to the ground as custom demanded. But scarcely had he done so before a rude laugh interrupted him, which was echoed by the whole party, while from within arose a sudden uproar of derisive laughter and excited speech, of which they could only catch the words :

“Beggars ! slaves ! ragamuffins ! foreign devils !” And the door was slammed to in their faces.

Fernandez, hitherto the strongest, staggered suddenly

against the wall, faint and worn-out. But the Japanese boy, in a gust of passion, sprang at the door like a young tiger, hammering with his fists and crying out :

“The Father shall not be insulted ! It is not to be borne ! Spawn of the earth ! crawling vipers of the swamp ! Open the dishonourable door of your dishonourable barn, and let the Father come in or I——”

“Silence, Bernardo !” and Xavier laid a restraining hand on the boy, though his voice shook with suppressed amusement. “Not another word ! I forbid it. See, there is a shed in the garden, and it may be we can find a way in. Perhaps there is straw, and we have our blankets. Come.”

The moon was rising now, very large and red through the mist, and by its light the three travellers crept into the poor shelter of the barn. A horse stirred in the darkness, and straw rustled under their feet. “Good,” laughed Xavier, “we shall have a warm bedfellow.”

Their tinder was damp, and had it not been they would not have dared to strike a light. But by one ray of misty moonlight they shared the small portion of cooked rice they carried with them, gave thanks for even such a shelter, and committed themselves to the mercy of God ; and then rolled themselves in the two blankets they carried between the three of them (Bernardo being given a blanket to himself and a warm spot against the back of the kindly horse), and so slept until the deep reverberating stroke of a gong from a Buddhist monastery perched on a neighbouring hill awoke them to the consciousness of sore feet and aching limbs and a new day.

CHAPTER XV

THROUGH THE FOREST TO KIOTO

“ **I** F this thrice-accursed forest would but end ! ” sighed Bernardo.

Their path led through a deep gorge between moss-covered rocks and twisted lichen-covered roots, the trees rising to an immense height above them, shutting out the pale sun of a wintry noon. It was intensely cold, the dry leaves cracked frostily under their sandals, and the vivid scarlet and purple fungi that blazed out here and there were fringed with rime. Their breath made a smoke in front of them as they walked.

“ This track must lead to a better road in time,” said Fernandez reassuringly. “ We should strike the main road to Kioto soon. What sound is that ? ” he added a moment later.

“ Wild boar or deer in the bushes,” said Fray Francisco absently, rousing himself as from a dream.

“ Could it be horsemen ? ” asked the Japanese boy, his voice shaking a little in spite of the courage upon which he prided himself. “ The men of Sakay said that the forests were full of soldiers, some for the Shogun and some for the rebels ; and only by the favour of the gods, so *they* said ” (the newly-made Christian corrected himself) “ could we hope to reach Kioto alive.”

“ By the favour of God our Lord,” returned Fray

Francisco peacefully, "I believe we shall. The sound we hear is water, Master Juan."

So it proved. A turn of the path brought them to a crazy bridge of bamboo ropes and half-rotten planks, beneath which a rushing torrent, swollen with winter rains, swirled into green depths below. It creaked threateningly as they passed over, but on the further side they reached a wider path and more open country. A wayside Buddha, weatherbeaten, with detached, impassive gaze, his stone hands laid inertly upon stone knees, warned them that they were approaching a village, and soon afterwards, at a turn of the road, a group of thatched houses came in sight, dominated by a many-roofed pagoda on a hill above them. The blue smoke rising from the cottages brought a welcome suggestion of warmth and food.

A group of children were playing by the roadside, and were the first to catch sight of them, children with bright, almond-shaped eyes, bare heads and blue peasant dresses. They formed a gay little picture after the gloom of the forest, and Xavier, holding out his hands to them with a welcoming gesture, smiled at them with all his heart in his eyes. There was evidently a little consultation amongst them, and one or two bold spirits took a few steps towards them, when a strident voice called them back, and there rushed upon the scene an orange-gowned, shaven-headed figure, waving his arms and uttering menacing cries. The children fled, and in a moment the whole village was roused, and with sticks and stones endeavoured to drive them back into the forest. Fray Francisco attempted to speak, but the flying missiles warned him that it was useless. Rather sadly they retreated again, searching for a side-track through the

undergrowth that bordered the road, in the hope of being able to skirt the village unperceived. But even here some half-dozen boys, delighting in the sport, pursued them with stones and mud. A stone whizzed by Xavier's head, grazing his forehead. "The very children——" he murmured regretfully, as he wiped away the traces. No children had ever before resisted the attraction of his personality, and it came as an unexpected pain. "Next time we find a friendly inn," he added with a rueful little smile, "I must buy some fruits or sweetmeats: they at least will win them. Come now, let us go somewhat further among the trees and make ourselves a shelter of boughs and sticks where we can rest until this hubbub is past."

They set to work upon this, though from time to time distant cries, and the crashing of stones through the branches showed that they were still being pursued. But after a while these died down and, it being now dusk, they decided to pass the night where they were and to creep through the village before the sun was up. Hungry and cold they yet slept soundly in their scanty blankets, and it was with difficulty that the older men were able to rouse the weary boy as the cocks from the village were beginning to crow. They shouldered their bundles and crept through the ghostly trees, lit only by a waning moon, then through the village street between the sleeping cottages. By the time the sun was warm they had left the village far behind, and the forest track had broadened into a fair road, encouraging them in the hope that they were on the main road to Kioto.

A pilgrim with a staff and begging-bowl, who spat at them as they passed, was the only traveller they encountered during the morning. At an inn by the roadside they

were able, in spite of suspicious looks, to purchase a little rice, and after a short midday rest they went on their way with fresh vigour. As the afternoon wore on the forest closed in upon them again, though the road was wide and well-trodden and had the appearance of a highway. What little sunshine remained was obscured by the close-growing trees, and a great silence seemed to hedge them round. Earlier in the day they had whistled and sung as they walked. Now they grew quiet, Xavier and Fernandez musing on the future, Bernardo thinking of his far-off home in Kagoshima. For some miles they had walked thus, when the undergrowth gave a sharp crackle, and they stopped abruptly, as some eight or nine armed men sprang across their path and barred their way. Bernardo trembled, but uttered no sound; Fernandez felt instinctively for the sword he had renounced when he took the cassock of a lay-brother; and Francisco de Xavier, of the old fighting stock of Navarre, flashed at them a look of haughty enquiry.

"Who may ye be?" yelled the foremost bandit, brandishing a short curved blade in their faces. Fantastic but formidable, with hard, lined, yellow faces surmounted by spiked and winged helmets, their cuirasses dented and smeared with blood, the company formed a solid phalanx behind their leader.

"Who may ye be?" he repeated harshly. "Are ye for the Shogun or for Prince Nobunaga?"

"Neither for the Shogun nor the Prince," returned Xavier sternly, "but peaceful travellers on our way to Kioto. What means this behaviour? Is this the courtesy for which your country is so renowned? By your armour I take you to be knights, but are these the manners of Samurai?"

"Rather the manners of slaves and ruffians!" muttered Bernardo below his breath; but the leader, taken aback for a moment by Xavier's dignity, now broke into a sneering laugh.

"Foreign devils!" he said. "Rope them to the trees and cut out their tongues, that they may tell no tales."

The sallow face of the Japanese lad whitened and his knees shook a little, but he stood his ground. Fernandez made the sign of the cross, folded his arms and stood waiting. Fray Francisco, after one quick, upward look of sudden rapture, whispered to Bernardo, "Remember the heroes of Nippon and the martyrs of Christ!" There was no time for more. Their arms were pinioned, their girdles stripped from them to serve as ropes, and they were dragged to the nearest group of trees. Bernardo closed his eyes, trying to pray. He felt the ropes tightening round his chest and shoulders, and the hot breath of his captors on his face. The glint of the curved sword, seen through his half-closed lids, was very near his face. He gave one glance towards the Father who, wrapt in silent ecstasy, was awaiting his turn. It was enough. If Fray Francisco could meet torture thus, Bernardo too was ready. And again he closed his eyes.

He felt the ropes slacken suddenly, heard a loud dismayed oath, and opened his eyes with a start. Some panic seemed to have seized the captors: he heard one mutter: "The Shogun's men!" and at the same moment became aware of horse-hoofs on the road behind them. A moment later their captors had vanished into the forest whence they had come, and a party of armed horsemen in gay livery rode by, bestowing only a passing glance upon the travellers by the roadside before dis-

appearing round the bend of the road. Then the three were alone.

Fray Francisco, brought suddenly back to earth, said not a word for some moments, but being the only one whose hands were free, picked up a long knife which one of the bandits had dropped in his flight and cut the bonds of his companions. Then with a curious, half-sad smile he handed it to Bernardo, who thrust it into his belt and stood looking around him with dazed eyes.

"Let us praise God," murmured Xavier, kneeling, but his voice sounded a little disappointed and resigned.

They had hardly risen from their knees when another party of horsemen, in steel armour, inlaid and gilt, came past them at a leisurely pace.

"Outriders, no doubt, to some nobleman," suggested Fernandez, and even as he spoke there came in sight as gorgeous a cavalcade as any the Spaniards had yet seen in the East, the centre of which was a litter with gold embroidered curtains, drawn by two black horses with sweeping crimson trappings. In it, swathed in velvet robes to protect him from the weather, reclined a languid gentleman, who cast a cold indifferent eye upon the three travel-stained wayfarers. On foot behind him, following at a brisk trot, came a number of pages and menials. Bernardo, recognizing their coat-of-arms, was awestruck. "He is of the Ashikaga, a great lord," he murmured, and almost prostrated himself by the roadside as the cavalcade swept by. Fernandez grasped him by the arm. "Ask them," he said quickly, "how far it is to Kioto?"

The boy sprang forward obediently to do so, but stopped in amazement at the sight of Fray Francisco

who, as soon as he had caught the name, drew from his pocket a letter, and with a few rapid steps boldly presented himself before the litter, raising his hat and bowing with that exaggeration of courtesy which Japanese custom demanded. Fernandez, in the sudden reaction from the strain of the last half-hour, could have laughed aloud at the curious spectacle. The hat in question was a native production of straw, such as peasants wore, bought in Sakay, their last stopping-place, and this, together with the ragged cassock, and in contrast to his courtly manner, gave the Father a grotesque appearance of which he was entirely unconscious. Even the Prince's impassive countenance betrayed some measure of disgust and astonishment, but he took the letter and made a sign to the cavalcade to stop. He read it in leisurely fashion, glanced at the signature, which was that of the Daimio of Kagoshima, and then, without wasting a glance upon the travellers, summoned one of the outriders, and apparently gave him an order. This personage, wheeling his horse about, waved a mailed hand scornfully toward Fray Francisco.

"The heaven-descended one," he announced loudly, so that the whole procession heard it, "will graciously permit you to run behind with his menials."

The hot blood rushed into Bernardo's cheeks. This was too much! Hardships or death he was willing to face, but such a humiliation as this for the descendant of princes! Surely the Great Father and Master Juan, themselves nobles in their own land, would reject the offer with the scorn it deserved. He threw an entreating, indignant glance towards Xavier.

But Xavier had turned to Fernandez with his gayest smile.

"Come then," he cried, tucking the ragged skirts of his cassock into his girdle as he spoke, "run we will! So, we shall not miss the road. Master Juan and Bernardo, young as you are, I will outrun you yet!"

His merriment and boyish spirit were irresistible, and even the indignant young Japanese forgot his pride as he set off at a steady pace in the wake of the running footmen. For him the effort demanded was nothing extraordinary; trained as he had been in physical exercise from childhood, according to Samurai tradition, the boy was as fleet as a deer. Fernandez, too, was young and athletic, and had been invigorated by the midday rest. But realizing how worn and exhausted Fray Francisco had appeared during the journey, Fernandez could but marvel a little anxiously at the tireless energy of those flying feet.

The exhilaration of the race along the frozen road in the crisp wintry air, combined with the reaction from the prospect of death and torture, enabled Bernardo at first to share the sense of joyous adventure which seemed to radiate from Fray Francisco as they followed the cavalcade up hill and down dale, through marshland where the wild duck rose in clouds with harsh angry cries, through villages where men and women prostrated themselves as the great man passed, and again through forest paths where the early dusk was beginning to gather. But after a while his breath grew laboured, his knees shook under him, and the sense of anger and humiliation rushed over him again at the sight of those impassive, disdainful riders ahead, moving on like inexorable fate, their curiously wrought armour glittering red in the sunset. Would they never stop? Yes, for a moment, but only that the runners might get their breath for a fresh effort.

The country was infested by bands of rebels and nightfall was not far off : delays were dangerous. Bernardo put forth his strength again, this time with sullen determination. One of the Prince's servants had seen him flag, and he caught a sneering remark which spurred him on. But all the exhilaration, the sense of jollity, had passed. Why had he left his princely home at Kagoshima to run like a dog behind a prince's litter, and to be made the sport of menials ? Who were these two foreigners, ragged and despised, that he should give up all for them and follow them blindly, even into such degradation as this ? But the thought was only momentary ; his inbred loyalty, first of Japanese virtues, rose up in protest against the unspoken treachery. In a flash of thought he recollected the moment when his whole soul had gone out in deathless allegiance to this simple, merry, godlike man and to the invisible Presence which inspired and sustained him. " In death or in life I follow him," the boy said resolutely to himself, as his feet flew mechanically over the roughening track.

For the roads had fallen into neglect during the ceaseless wars and tumults of which Kyoto had so long been the centre, and here and there sharp stones and tangles of thorn-bush obstructed their way. Darkness, too, was falling. Faster and faster rode the pages and outriders, determined to reach Kyoto before dark : faster and faster, but now as if in a dream, the travellers ran through the gathering dark. For the last hour there was no sound but the clatter of the horse-hoofs and the labouring breath of the weary runners. Through the mist which swam before his eyes, Bernardo became aware of a glimmer of moonlight upon the road, and the long shadows of pine trees across the path. Then, as the moon brightened,

a hill loomed up ahead, the pale light catching the multiform curves of the many-roofed monasteries that crowded among its rocks. "Mount Hiei," muttered one of the runners to his fellow, slackening his pace. Then, pointing to the yellow lights twinkling at its foot :

" Kioto ! "

CHAPTER XVI

IN A BUDDHIST MONASTERY

AND yet at Kioto, reached with so much labour, failure dogged them at every step.

The capital was distracted with war, and with the daily rioting and burning carried on by the rival factions, and had no mind to listen to foreigners who looked like beggars. Ignorant of the custom which reduced the Mikado to a myth-like existence, and vested all power in his chief minister, the Shogun, Xavier applied day after day for an audience at the royal palace, without success. The Shogun was absent from the capital, and a state of anarchy prevailed. After several weeks' unavailing effort, and still in the depths of winter, the three returned, as they had come, on foot to Hirado, to be welcomed there by Paulo and Master Diaz, almost as men risen from the dead.

It was at Yamaguchi that the tide turned. Fernandez was preaching, with dogged but almost despairing courage, in the streets of the town, surrounded by a well-dressed, politely attentive, but unmoved crowd, some of whom with difficulty concealed their amusement at his faulty language. Once he seemed to be holding them, but at the critical moment the correct word escaped him, and he searched in vain for a substitute. Some one in the crowd laughed ; cold despair gripped him. And then a mean-looking little shoemaker, whose shop he had passed and

whose hostile looks he had noticed, called out an expression of ridicule which set the whole crowd rocking with laughter. "Take that, foreign dog," said he, and spat in Fernandez's face.

Juan Fernandez was young, impulsive and of the bluest blood in Spain. His sunburnt face flamed suddenly at the insult. Like the rest of the little company he was weakened with fever, worn out with travelling, and weary of these scornful unresponsive Japanese. For a moment he set his teeth and breathed hard. There was a breathless silence, while the crowd waited to see what he would do. Then, as he stood dumb, the term which he had forgotten flashed suddenly into his mind. Without the slightest change of tone he continued his speech as though there had been no disturbance. The crowd was silenced and heard him respectfully to the end. And when he had finished, and was turning rather sadly to go away, an elderly man, dressed in a rich plum-coloured silk kimono, intercepted him, and with much bowing and formality expressed his regret for the insult offered to a stranger in their city, and invited him to his house. He was a leading citizen, and from that moment success began.

A few days later, and in various parts of the town, among the crudely painted deities which decorated the doorways of the citizens of Yamaguchi, appeared a proclamation in the name of the Daimio, forbidding the people of the district "under grave penalties to hinder or molest any of the Fathers who preach the law of God."

The result was magical. Within a week the homeless and travel-worn company found themselves housed in unexpected luxury and even splendour. A Buddhist monastery on the outskirts of the town lying empty, the Daimio graciously invited them to inhabit it, sending

them provisions from his own table. The humour of the situation was certainly not lost upon either Xavier or Fernandez, and very gay was their first evening meal in the richly carved Hall of Study, where a multitude of weird, many-armed monsters gazed down at them stonily from doorways and ceiling. Very solemn was the exorcism in the partly ruined temple, from which the images had been removed after an earthquake, but still devil-haunted, as men of that age could not fail to believe; and awful and filled with adoring joy was the hour of the first Mass said at the cleansed and consecrated altar.

The new teaching had become fashionable in Yamaguchi, and week by week, as the spring and summer passed, and in the orchards and gardens surrounding the city the sheets of pink blossom gave way to crimson camellias and the delicate grace of wisteria, the courts of the monastery were daily thronged by an enquiring crowd. To Xavier these were days of supreme happiness, and his eager joy communicated itself to his companions. This sea of intelligent faces upraised to his as he stood at the temple door, faces grown weary and hopeless in the unnatural effort to find rest in the extinction of desire, or else betraying the depth of degradation of those who had abandoned the quest: these were to him an irresistible appeal. Often Fernandez or Diaz would be obliged to drag him, almost by force, to take necessary rest and food.

“Honoured sir,” asked one day an aged mendicant, whose shaven head and dingy orange robe he had often noticed, “you say that he who keeps the Law of your God shall have increasing joy. How may this be when strength departs and the body is attacked by the many ills of age? It is true that by fleeing from desire

one may escape from sorrow, but this joy of which you speak is not sought by the wise. Do not all sages agree that youth is the age of greatest happiness ? ”

Xavier had turned to him with a look of grave compassion, at the sad old eyes and pitifully trembling hands clasping the inevitable alms-bowl.

“ My father,” said he, “ tell me this. When sailors leave one port for another, which hour is the happiest for them, the hour when they are in mid-ocean, or the hour when they are almost in haven ? ”

The old man pondered long and silently. Then he answered sadly :

“ All this is not for me, for I do not know to what port my ship is going.”

“ Come again,” urged Fray Francisco, “ and let me tell you more.”

But the medicant shook his head.

“ I am too old,” he said, “ for new teachings. Honoured sir, farewell.” And bowing deeply he left him and went his way.

It was towards autumn that Xavier’s spirits began to be clouded with anxiety for those left behind at Kago-shima, their landing-place and first home in Japan. Not without doubts and misgivings had he left the work in the hands of Paulo, the brilliant young Japanese whom he had brought from Malacca, and whose courage had saved them from the Pirate-Captain. But although at times Paulo had shown signs of a proud and impatient temper, yet on the whole his mental and spiritual growth had seemed so promising that Fray Francisco had had hopes of seeing him admitted before long to the priesthood by the Bishop of Goa. Left at Kagoshima in a position of responsibility, his reports had for a time been

as regular as the difficulties of travelling allowed, and all seemed prosperous. But by degrees his letters had grown rarer and their tone less confident, and of late they had ceased altogether. At last, when the suspense was no longer to be borne, it was decided to send the lad Bernardo, his cousin, whose home was in Kagoshima and whose loyalty had never wavered, in spite of sundry attacks of homesickness, to visit his parents and discover the cause of Paulo's silence.

It was late autumn when he returned. The day was very still and sunny, and as he drew near the monastery the smoke from the little wooden houses by the roadside rose straight and blue against the flaming scarlet and bronze of the orchard trees. It was the season of one of the annual pilgrimages, and the courtyard was for once almost deserted: and as Bernardo crossed it Fray Francisco came out of the temple and, seeing him, stood still.

All his life Bernardo carried with him a mental picture of Fray Francisco as he stood there, dressed in the dark silk Japanese robe he had adopted out of respect for native custom, his hair white, and in his whole aspect the grace and charm of the Spanish noble merged into the dignity and gentleness of the "Great Father." But as the boy hurried towards him he could not fail to notice how sunken were his eyes and how worn his whole aspect. Xavier greeted him affectionately, holding his hands a moment or two in his.

"One son has come back to me," he said. "And Paulo—what of him?"

His evident dread of the answer made Bernardo turn his head away from the questioning, sleepless eyes. His reply was evasive.

"I did not see him. He was from home."

"Where? Hide nothing from me. I, your Father command you," said Xavier.

Bernardo shrugged his shoulders resignedly. The Father must be obeyed, yet to hurt the Father was unpleasant.

"Ask me not, Father," he said fiercely. "He is not worthy to live!"

Little by little the story came out. Paulo, left in sole charge of the little community, had at first carried on the work with enthusiasm. Then difficulties had arisen: the Daimio had grown more and more hostile, sundry Christians had been seized and imprisoned, and the Buddhist monks had been indefatigable in spreading evil reports of the foreign teachers, until all was at a standstill. And Paulo had one day disappeared from Kago-shima and had not been seen since.

"But, perhaps," pleaded Fray Francisco, catching at a shred of hope, "he too has been seized secretly, and foully dealt with."

"Not so, with your pardon, Father," Bernardo replied with stubborn indignation. "He is of the Daimio's own kin, and the Daimio would not touch him. Moreover, he left a letter for his father, saying that the persecution was intolerable, and that he was therefore forced to seek an easier life." And Bernardo ground his teeth in helpless rage. The suffering in the Father's face wrung his loyal boyish soul.

There was a few moments' tense silence. From the town came a sound of distant singing, monotonous and mournful. Juan Fernandez, coming out of the Hall of Study and catching sight of Bernardo, hurried towards them, but stopped short at the sight of Xavier's face.

At last he said, and his voice sounded scarcely his own :

“ I must go and seek him.”

That same night he set out for Kagoshima. A month later he returned, and one glance at his face confirmed the worst fears of those who waited for him.

“ You have seen Paulo ? ” Fernandez ventured to ask him. Xavier bowed his head.

“ He is —— ” he began, and broke off. Then, “ He has denied the Faith and turned pirate.”

Fernandez would have asked more, but the dumb appeal in the Father's eyes checked him. From that time something of his old buoyancy left him, though the gay spirit flashed out still at intervals. His attacks of fever became more frequent, and each seemed to sap a little more of his vitality. And only Fernandez knew, though perhaps Bernardo also guessed, how many nights he spent in the ruined temple, wrestling in an agony of prayer.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAST ADVENTURE

"**G**LORIA in excelsis Deo," sang one hundred fresh boys' voices in the college chapel at Goa, at the Maundy Thursday Mass—"Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee——"

Bernardo's voice choked. How could one praise God, even at the Blessed Sacrament, when one's heart was like lead? He tried to fix his eyes upon the white-draped altar, his mind upon the mystic Presence there, but both would stray towards the kneeling figure a few paces from him, the bowed white head, the face hidden in the thin brown hands. Once the face, glowing with unearthly fervour, was for a moment lifted, and the boy saw it with an indescribable pang. For he knew that in an hour or so he should see it no more.

It was very early, and the air was still fresh before the great heat of the day began, though the college garden was already growing scorched and brown. The Superior, the Brothers of the College, and all the whitecoated students, a mass of smooth black heads and shining faces of varying browns, were gathered to offer the Holy Sacrifice for the safety and success of Fray Francisco de Xavier and those who with him were about to sail on the greatest of all his adventures. And in the harbour

waited the *San Cristoforo*, which was to carry them to Malacca, the first stage of the voyage to China.

Fray Francisco had left Japan some fifteen months earlier, called back to India by urgent affairs connected with the College, and leaving the newly-founded Church of Japan to the care of Juan Fernandez. To the boy Bernardo he had transferred the hopes which at first had centred in Paulo, and him he had brought back with him to join the students at Goa. As for Bernardo himself, fears and homesickness were swallowed up in the supreme joy of finding himself the Father's companion, and in spite of the crowd of foreign lads and the babble of Indian dialects that surrounded him, his first twelve months at Goa had been entirely happy. Then, at one blow, his happiness had been shattered by the news of the Father's decision to attempt a landing in China. Worst of all, though he had begged and intreated on his knees to be taken with him, the Father had, with gentle firmness, refused his plea, and had chosen in his stead the great, clumsy, silent Chinese Antonio, who had forgotten his own tongue, and who had never been tested as he, Bernardo, had been, in actual danger.

Fray Francisco's plans had been carefully laid. He had persuaded the Viceroy to appoint his merchant-friend Diego Pereira as ambassador to the Emperor of China, and Pereira, with a variety of costly presents for the Emperor, was awaiting him with his ship at Malacca. Xavier had written at great length to the Governor of Malacca, Don Pedro da Silva, upon whose loyal friendship and assistance he knew he could count, and the blessing of the Bishop of Goa had also been obtained. For his companions he had chosen a young Portuguese lay-brother with an aptitude for languages, and Cristo-

fero the Tamil who had been his companion among the Paravas, as well as the Chinese student Antonio. As for the peril, and his manifest physical unfitness for such a strain, the Fathers and other friends at Goa had ceased to remonstrate. A sense of awe, as in the presence of the supernatural, was with them increasingly in these days of preparation, as he spoke with quiet certainty of opening a way. Yet he was human enough, and merry enough, with his old light-hearted gaiety, as he mixed with the boys in the college garden during the evening recreation hour.

But Bernardo, since the Father's refusal to take him as a companion, had held persistently aloof from him, avoiding his eyes, shrinking from his look and touch. Now, as, the Mass being ended, he saw Fray Francisco step towards the altar, and turn to ask their prayers and give them his parting blessing, the boy hardly heard the words he said, but only saw that a shaft of sunlight was wrapping the worn robe in a kind of glory, that the Father's face looked very unearthly and very far away ; only felt, with the black despair of extreme youth, that he, Bernardo, had nothing further to live for, and that he hated with a fervent jealousy the stolid, immovable Chinese and dark-faced Tamil who were given the honour denied to him.

As in a dream he saw the Father bidding one and another farewell, and as in a dream he found himself outside the chapel and felt the Father's hand on his shoulder.

Reluctantly he raised his eyes to the eyes that read his very soul.

"How is it with you, my son ? Answer me."

Bernardo's eyes fell.

"Well enough," he muttered almost inaudibly. Then, compelled again to meet the keen scrutiny of Xavier's look, the barrier his sullen misery had set up seemed suddenly to be swept away.

"The sun has gone out, Father," he whispered, in a choking voice.

With a slight, compelling gesture Xavier drew him into the now empty chapel, heavy with incense, and the suggestion of passionate prayer. And somehow, without knowing how, the boy was on his knees, his face hidden, while the stern, loving voice went on, cutting and healing at once.

"This is sin, Bernardo. I am not your sun. Better you had not seen my face and had still worshipped the idols of your forefathers than set up in their stead a man sinful as I am."

"Father, I would serve you—I would die for you—Antonio loves you not—Antonio——"

"Antonio is also a knight of God our Lord, and in the Company of Jesus must be none but loyal knights. It is His voice, not mine, that requires you to stay here, Bernardo."

The boy was silent, but the voice went on, in words not unlike the words which have come down to us connected with his name, to remind him once more of the "nails and spear and manifold disgrace," the "griefs and torments numberless——" until Bernardo, utterly broken, hid his wet face in Xavier's robe and sobbed out :

"Father, I will obey."

"I know it, Bernardo, and I trust you. Now listen, and you will see how greatly I trust you. I have a commission to leave with you, a task which you alone can do. Except for you and me, the Superior alone shall know of

this ; it shall be our secret, yours and mine. It may be that I shall not return from China. If not, rejoice and give thanks for me, and strive the more manfully to perfect yourself in all things that may fit you for the office of a priest. And when your studies are ended I want you to bear a message for me, Bernardo, to Europe."

He paused. The eyes of the kneeling boy never left his face.

"In Europe, Bernardo, there are great cities, greater than Goa, greater than Kioto, full of colleges, where men of all nations strive and strain to gain degrees and honours and high places in the world, but of them all, young and strong and gifted as they are, scarce one thinks it worth his while to leave these vain honours and dignities that they may feed the hungry souls in the Indies and in the islands of Japan. There, too, in Rome, lives the man to whom I owe my soul (and you yours, my son, if the matter were rightly understood), my only Father and the General of our Order, Messire Ignazio de Loyola."

The boy nodded. He could not speak.

"To him I bid you go. The Superior here will arrange for your voyage and will direct you to him. Tell him, when you get there, tell him——"

He hesitated one moment. Before his mental eye rose the face and figure of the man from whom he had been so long parted, the halting gait, the deeply furrowed face, the stern look which veiled his limitless tenderness for his exiled sons. Could he but see it all once more ! But Bernardo was waiting.

"Tell him," he went on quietly, "all that you may hear about this expedition, of how we fared at the hands of the Chinese. He will wish to know all. Tell him also of your countrymen, of their needs, of our work there and

all that remains to be done. And when he knows it, and also our Brethren who are with him, it may be that some who hear it from their lips and yours may leave their vain striving for honours that pass away, and may come and seek the Japanese. You follow me ? ”

“ Yes, Father.”

“ You will go ? ”

And again, Bernardo, with a gulp in his throat, answered him :

“ I will obey.” And obey he did.

Xavier blessed the boy, then raised him and kissed him on the cheek.

“ This life is short,” he said, “ and in the next—we do not part. Come, the ship waits.”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

THE *San Cristoforo*, bearing Francisco de Xavier and his companions, sailed into the harbour of Malacca one evening late in May, through an oily sea and under an oppressive sky shot with summer lightning, thus beginning an expedition designed to serve both worlds in a manner which later ages have condemned as at least unwise and destined to failure. But no one saw the worn face of the man who was the mainspring of it all, as he stepped out on to the quay, straining his eyes for a sight of the masts of Pereira's stately ship among the mass of rigging, could have suspected him of any other aim than one of a most fantastic selflessness and purity, any other desire than his overmastering passion to "open a way" by which another great race of mankind might eventually reach its goal.

In the midst of the jostling, yelling crowd of Portuguese sailors, Malays and half-castes on the quay, the little company of four searched in vain for any trace of Don Pereira or any of his servants. It may be that already some sense of coming disaster weighed upon Xavier, accentuated by the oppressive, thundery sky and the gloomy looks of the young Portuguese brother beside him, who was already beginning to shiver with fever and was perhaps repenting of his readiness to come. But he did not yield to it.

"Don Diego could not have known," said he, "when we should arrive. We must enquire for his house."

The information was readily given, for the merchant was well known in Malacca, and they threaded their way through the narrow, filthy, stifling streets of the port, the strong, sturdily built Chinese easily shouldering their few personal possessions. But on arriving at the pillared porch of Pereira's stone bungalow the liveried Malay who answered their summons stared at the little group with a curious kind of dismay, hesitated, muttered something inaudible, and finally stammered out that Don Diego was absent, but would return shortly.

The Portuguese would have burst out into indignant remonstrance, but Xavier silenced him.

"You three must seek a lodging," he said, "while I go to the Governor's house. There has been some error, but Don Pedro will set all right. Let no one be discouraged; I have great confidence in the Governor."

"Nevertheless, the Father is afraid," whispered Cristofero the Tamil to the impassive Chinese, who made no reply.

After appointing a meeting-place with his companions, Fray Francisco walked on with rapid steps to the Governor's house. Whatever untoward accident might be hindering the project of the great expedition to China, the goal of his desires, Don Pedro da Silva's sincerity was above suspicion, Don Pedro's friendship had never failed him yet. Walking swiftly, his lips moving at times, he reached the wide portico of the Governor's house.

"Tell His Excellency, the Governor," he said firmly, to the overdressed and languid lackeys who were lounging in the doorway, and who stared at him with open

insolence, "that Fray Francisco de Xavier desires to speak with him."

The man addressed bowed, with something like a suppressed snigger, and withdrew. The hot minutes passed. From some inner apartment came the sound of a guitar, and the shrill chatter of women's voices. A sharp fear shot through Xavier as he waited. There was an indefinable change about the aspect of the house since his former visit. What had happened?

Still the minutes passed. There was a clink of glasses from the inner room, and the laughing and chatter grew louder. The lackeys smiled to one another. "His Excellency is amusing himself," they murmured.

At last the man who had taken Xavier's message reappeared.

"His Excellency is engaged on important business," he said with unconcealed, scornful merriment. "He cannot attend to the Father."

Xavier was struck dumb. The fear which had before assailed him had grown almost to a certainty.

"Tell me one thing," he said at last, in a voice that shamed the man suddenly into gravity. "I understood that Don Pedro da Silva was Governor of Malacca. Am I mistaken?"

"The Father is mistaken," replied the man more courteously. "Don Pedro sailed for Portugal a month ago. Our present Governor is his brother, His Excellency, Don Alvaro d'Ataide."

"I thank you," and Xavier turned so calmly away that no one who had watched his retreating figure could have guessed that he had been stricken with a mortal blow.

CHAPTER XIX

THE REVENGE OF ALVARO D'ATAIDE

A LETTER was brought to him late that evening at the poor lodgings at which he had rejoined his friends. He knew the handwriting and the servant's livery. It was from Diego Pereira.

“TO FRAY FRANCISCO DE XAVIER,—

“Sir, our hopes are at an end, since Señor Don Alvaro forbids our sailing. Father, I am ruined to the extent of five thousand *pardoas*, which at your request I have spent upon presents for the King of China. The men who were to have sailed with us are ruined also. I do not reproach you, since the fault lies with the Governor. The saints only know what object he has in this, but I think he has his own private ventures which our expedition would have hindered. Also report says that he has some grudge against you; how have you contrived to anger him? But it boots not to enquire; as Captain-General of the Sea his power is absolute. Once more I reproach you not, but it were best I should not see your face.

“DIEGO PEREIRA.”

Xavier spread out the letter on his knees, and for a long time neither spoke nor moved, his eyes upon the rapidly darkening patch of sky through the open window,

oblivious to the ugly sounds and mingled smells which floated up from the street below, oblivious even to the querulous questions of the Portuguese brother, who lay wrapped in a rug in a corner of the bare room, shivering with fever. The Tamil, too, cast nervous glances at him, and seemed restless and troubled, but dared not question him : only Antonio remained perfectly undisturbed, his grave wooden face betraying no anxiety, while he busied himself in conjuring a fairly appetizing supper out of the poor provision of rice and vegetables supplied to them by the half-breed wife of the Portuguese barber below-stairs. But the Father, when at last he roused himself from the contemplation of Pereira's letter, would not eat. He said *Compline*, and then, sending the other two to rest, prepared to stay the night beside the sick man. And the Portuguese, who slept badly, with feverish, wakeful intervals, reported afterwards that except for attending to his wants, Fray Francisco spent the night on his knees.

In the morning the brother was better, and Xavier, bidding them not to expect him for an hour or two, slipped out to hear Mass at the Church of our Lady. The morning hours passed by, midday came, and afternoon, and still they waited, while Xavier was watching the slow minutes drag past in Don Alvaro's ante-room.

At last they faced one another ; the Governor considering that he had sufficiently humiliated the man he hated by subjecting him for five hours to the humours of his lackeys. The rankling memory of the chains he had once worn, which he attributed in part to the influence of Xavier, lent a keener flavour to his present triumph. Time and self-indulgence had not improved the appearance of Don Alvaro d'Ataide da Gama. Dressed with

the old fastidious care in a peach-coloured doublet heavy with silver lace, his skin had a loose, yellowish appearance, his lips sneered as of old, and his eyes were blood-shot. In the same room in which Xavier had often supped with Don Pedro, but now filled with Oriental couches and inlaid cabinets of Indian workmanship, the two men confronted one another.

Fray Francisco had begun by demanding an explanation of the Governor's action in forbidding the projected expedition to China, which had been sanctioned both by the Viceroy and by the Bishop of Goa. Worn, sleepless, fasting, he looked as though only his indomitable spirit kept him upright in the presence of his enemy. Yet Don Alvaro could not meet his eyes.

"Believe me, Father," he said with oily courtesy, "I regret your disappointment exceedingly, no man more than I. Your zeal for the souls of the Chinese is laudable, very laudable; I wish that more of our priests and religious shared it. I may say I am in sympathy with you entirely. I hope that before long a more propitious time may arrive for sending an embassy to the Emperor of China, but at the present moment it is out of the question; the Chinese are far too hostile to us Europeans; it would be madness. As for the Viceroy, good, well-intentioned man, he has acted under a misapprehension—he is altogether ignorant of the Chinese and their ways. No, I repeat, I regret your disappointment, Father, but there is no other course open to me but to forbid your sailing. You may remember that I hold the office of Captain-General of the Sea. You will be wise to return to Goa."

To all this Fray Francisco, with a vivid recollection of the murdered babes of the fishery coast, listened

silently, partly conscious of the fate gathering over him, partly aware that his dearest scheme was already defeated by this incarnation of greed, lust and cruelty, who had already frustrated so many of his desires. Yet certain that, even at the worst, through failure, he could not fail ; through despair itself he would reach his triumph. Perhaps, too, it was given him to see, in a prophetic flash, the doom which was to come upon this man before him, now so blatant in his coarse triumph : the doom of leprosy.

Still Don Alvaro's smooth, cold voice went on speaking, explaining, excusing. At last it grew a little hesitating and trailed off into silence. Still Xavier did not speak. The Governor dropped his eyes and bit his fingers.

Then Fray Francisco spoke. Coldly, sternly, in short, sharp sentences he told him that should he prevent the expedition he did so at the peril of his soul.

Don Alvaro laughed harshly and fidgeted.

" You need not think to alarm me with such bugbears, Father," he said. " Your audience is at an end. You are permitted to retire."

" One word further, Senhor Don Alvaro. Do you realize that in forbidding this mission, sent with the sanction and blessing of the Bishop of Goa, you stand in peril of excommunication ? "

The unwholesome pallor of Alvaro's face turned livid with sudden fear. Then his fury burst out. In a moment the thin pretence of courtesy dropped from him : all the filth and slime of the man's nature rose to the surface. He blustered and cursed, hurling foul and offensive epithets at the silent figure before him. Xavier heard him out until he paused for breath, bowed slightly, and left him.

He returned straightway to his lodging and there broke to his companions the fact that their hopes were at an end. The Portuguese brother, by now thoroughly unnerved, broke out into complaints and recriminations which Xavier sternly silenced ; Cristoforo who, in his turn, was showing signs of fever, turned his face to the wall and did not speak. The Chinese alone showed no emotion, but fetched a bowl of hot soup from his landlady's kitchen and stood waiting while Fray Francisco drank it.

Xavier spent the night in the Church of Our Lady, and in the early morning, as he was about to say Mass with special intention for Don Alvaro, Antonio joined him and asked to be his server.

A quick look of pleasure answered him, but as they returned to their lodgings, through the still sleeping city, not a word passed between them. As the day went on it became evident that the Governor had stirred up all the scum of the city against them. A cosmopolitan crowd gathered in the street beneath their window, hooting them whenever they appeared, singing ribald songs and throwing in stones and refuse. It was not possible to stir from the house, and Xavier spent the greater part of the day in writing : to the Viceroy of Goa, begging him to refund Diego Pereira for all he had spent ; to his friends at the College ; and to Pereira himself who, to his credit, had the grace to keep, and later to treasure, the letter.

" Sir," he wrote to the merchant, " since your sins and mine are so great that on this account God our Lord was not willing to make use of us, there is nobody we can blame but them. And mine were so great that they sufficed. You may well accuse me, Sir, of having ruined you and all who were of your company. I beseech you

to remember that my intention was always to serve you, as you and God our Lord know. If this were not so I should die of pain . . . I have already taken leave of Senhor Don Alvaro, since he was pleased to think it well to prevent our going. It grieves me for the punishment which must come on him, greater than he thinks.

“ Your sad and disconsolate friend,

“ FRANCISCO.”

He sanded, folded and sealed the letter, remained a little while in thought, then took up his quill again and wrote on a fresh sheet :

“ To the Father Ignazio de Loyola.

“ MOST DEAR FATHER——”

But the letter proceeded no further. Not yet would he write these heartbreaking tidings to the man he loved above all others ; long as he might to unburden his grief, not until some more hopeful plan presented itself would he write again to his “ only Father.”

When night fell and the crowd in the street, tired of shouting, had disappeared at last, he signed to Antonio to follow him, and they went out into the street. Unnoticed they reached the porch of the Church of Our Lady. All was very dark and silent, but for the intensely sad and quiet tones of Fray Francisco's voice.

“ Antonio, it is certain that our two brothers will return to Goa. There remain but you and me. What will *you* do ? ”

Antonio's voice, calm and even as usual, answered him :

“ Where the Father goes I go.”

" You remember what you said to me, that first day I saw you at Goa, when I told you that we would go one day, you and I, to China ? "

" I remember it."

" And you still hold the same opinion ? "

" The same."

" And that is——? "

" That no foreigner leaves China alive."

" Yet you will come with me, even if it be to China ? "

" I have said."

" Then listen, Antonio, and I will tell you what I have purposed in my mind, and I think also that it is the purpose of God our Lord. I shall take a passage in some Portuguese ship sailing to Sanchian, where you were bought, and where, as you know well, there is trade with China. Here, with what money remains to me, I shall prevail upon some Chinese captain to take me to Canton. Thence I would find my way to the house of the Governor. I would tell him, in what little Chinese I have learned and can learn at Sanchian, that I came as a messenger to the King of China, and I would show him the letter I bear from the Bishop."

He paused. Antonio said simply :

" As the Father will."

" Now the dangers we run are two," Xavier went on, " and it is well that you should weigh them. First, that the Chinese captain may take our money and then cast us into the sea or upon some desert island. Or, should we reach Canton and come before the Governor, he may command us to be made prisoners, or else to be tortured, since our coming is against the law of the land. Many have died thus before us, but not in the cause of God our Lord. Are you prepared for this, Antonio ? "

There was just a perceptible pause before the Chinese lad answered. When he did it was to repeat—and his voice was as unmoved as usual :

“Where the Father goes I go.”

There was an indescribable gladness in Xavier's voice when he spoke again.

“Then I am not forsaken. We will go, my son, in spite of Don Alvaro and all the wiles of the devil.”

CHAPTER XX

SANCHIAN

A BARREN island surrounded by a grey, turbulent sea, a background of bare hills and a rocky beach stretching down to a small, natural harbour, in which a few Portuguese merchantmen and a number of Chinese junks were anchored : a small wood under the shelter of the hills, largely depleted to form the rude huts which straggled towards the harbour : such was Sanchian, the island from which Fray Francisco hoped to effect his entrance into China.

Antonio's first care, since it was late autumn and the winds were cold, was to construct a hut of stones and branches ; Xavier's to get into conversation with the Canton merchants in and about the harbour. With his aptitude for languages, and sometimes the help of an interpreter, he succeeded in making his desire known. In this Antonio was of little use, having forgotten his own tongue during the years at Goa. Day by day Fray Francisco returned to his hut disappointed ; not a man of them all seemed willing to risk the penalty which threatened any Chinaman who dared to introduce a European into a Chinese port.

Ships came and went. In the huts that surrounded them, gambling, drinking and wild and ribald singing went on night after night ; for every European, gentleman-adventurer or simple sailor, knew that he took his life in

his hands for daring to set foot even on such Chinese soil as this, and took care to drown fear in dissipation. Antonio, who had the strength of a young giant and the tireless industry of his race, had soon erected a straw-thatched chapel in which Fray Francisco could say Mass daily, and here not a few of the merchants gathered, especially on the Sundays, with a half-superstitious hope that the offering of the Holy Sacrifice might avert the evil which at other times they so recklessly courted. Here, one evening, when they had already been some weeks on the island, Antonio, who had been cooking outside the hut, went to join him for Compline, and found him with a radiant face.

"It is accomplished," he cried gaily. "I have arranged it all. Yon grey-headed Chinaman, marked with the smallpox, with whom I talked yesterday, has agreed to take us. I have promised him two hundred cruzados' worth of pepper, and he will take us three weeks hence, when the last of the Portuguese ships has left, so that there may be none here for the Chinese Governor to wreak vengeance upon if he is offended at our daring. It is a small junk, and there will be none in it but his sons and a few of his servants, all sworn to secrecy. He sails for Canton to-morrow, but in three weeks he will return and take us. Once there, he has promised to hide us in his house. Come, Antonio, rejoice with me," he added, and there was in his eager voice a faint note of anxiety.

"I rejoice that the Father is happy," was Antonio's non-committal reply.

They said Compline together, and before they ended one of the Portuguese captains, a man noted for his crimes of bloodshed, slipped in and knelt quietly in the darkness outside the circle of candlelight which alone

illuminated the chapel hut, waiting for an opportunity of making his confession. Such things happened almost daily. Antonio left them and returned to prepare their straw beds, and if possible to rig up a little shelter against the night winds which blew unmercifully through the light framework of the hut. Since landing at Sanchian the Father had had fever once already.

He was asleep before the Father came in, but awakened soon after midnight by Xavier's voice talking in quick, excited tones, and knew in an instant that it was the delirium of fever. He rose, fumbled for the tinder-box and struck a light, fetched what little water remained from their small daily supply and put it to his lips, and then sat down to wait until morning. There was nothing more to be done, and slowly the hours passed, while he watched and listened to the incoherent murmurs and restless tossing of the sick man on the straw.

In the morning he became quieter and sank into a heavy, unrefreshing sleep, his face turned to the wall, his head clasped in his hands, moaning a little at intervals. Antonio slipped out, begged some water and a little wine from one of the other huts and returned. A little group of Chinese children, natives of the island with whom the Father had made friends, were crowding round the door, their bright slit eyes peering in curiously. Antonio scattered them all with one sweep of his big arm and went softly in. The Father still lay in the same position, clasping his head and breathing heavily.

"You had better bathe his head with water," said a seaman, passing and looking in; "but they say it is an ill thing to let a fevered man drink."

Antonio did his best and then sat down by his side. At that time of day the island was fairly quiet and the

hours dragged by with little to mark their passing, while the patient Oriental sat cross-legged on the earthen floor scarcely moving, his eyes fixed on the sick man's face.

None could guess what thoughts were passing behind that mask-like, ivory face, as he sat watching beside the man who was in truth dying for his, Antonio's, unknown countrymen, impelled by an unseen force, of which the lad, too, knew something, to acts which seemed like madness in the eyes of a world which could not but unwillingly admire. Later, when Antonio returned to Goa, he related every detail of these strange last days and wrote, too, a letter to the Fathers in Europe telling of them as fully as he could, but he gave the facts almost without comment. The Chinese, for all his intellectual powers, was not one to translate his emotions into speech.

At last, towards evening, Xavier stirred and opened his eyes.

"Antonio," he said, and smiled.

The Chinese was on his feet in an instant.

"How do you, Father?" he asked, bending over him.

"Better," was the answer. "By the mercy of God our Lord the pain in my head is lessening. Lie down and sleep, my son, I know not what day or hour it is, but I think you have been with me a long while. I shall want for nothing. But first, I pray you, a little water."

Antonio hesitated. A puzzled and distressed look crept into the usually impassive face.

"They say it is not good, Father," he said hesitatingly.

"Be it so," was the patient answer from lips that were parched and dry.

The fever, however, lessened from that time, and in a day or two he was about again, bright and full of hope, gathering the Chinese children round him, and talking to

them in a mixture of Chinese and Portuguese which drew from them peals of delighted laughter. There was one little ragged, flat-faced girl to whom he always showed a peculiar tenderness : Antonio wondered why, knowing nothing of the history of the Pirate's daughter. But what troubled the Chinese lad was the transparent look of the Father's face and the blueness of his lips.

The Portuguese captain, whose confession Xavier had heard two days before, laid a rough but kindly hand on Antonio's shoulder that night and drew him out of earshot.

"Here, you, Chinaman," he said, "you're an honest lad and seem to have some sense. It is of no use for me to speak to the Father : one might as well talk to a post, for he will not heed me. I want you to persuade him to give up this mad enterprise. I sail from here to-morrow, and I would have you urge him to come with us. The ships are leaving every day, and it is ten chances to one that yon spotted Chinese devil who promised to take him to Canton will never come for him, and you will be left here to starve, unless the fever should carry him off first." Then, seeing the lad's unmoved face, he added impatiently :

"You understand me ?"

"I should do so," returned Antonio with dignity, "seeing that I was at Goa seven years."

"Then, by all the saints, you are a cool fellow ! But for all that I could tell you things which would make your flesh creep. Suppose this man keeps faith and lands you at Canton—suppose the Father has his way and appears before the Governor, what then ? I tell you, boy, your countrymen are the veriest fiends for cruelty in all heathendom. I knew a man who disguised himself and landed on the Chinese coast and ten years later he escaped here

to Sanchian, to die a few days afterwards. They had kept him in a dungeon all those years, weighed down every night with iron chains and a heavy log laid across his chest. He told me before he died that above a hundred other Europeans were confined there with him, some with their tongues cut out or their ears seared off. That is what awaits Fray Francisco if he goes to China." Then, bringing his hand down heavily on Antonio's shoulder, he roared out, "*Tell him, boy!*"

Antonio shook his head. "He knows it all, senhor, and more. But he will go."

The Portuguese stormed a little, shrugged his shoulders and went away. Next morning his ship sailed, and his hut, set on fire before he left, was reduced to smouldering ashes, as a sign that he laid no claim to any Chinese soil.

As the days passed the ships diminished one by one, and the smoke of burning huts ascended daily. But the Father had had very little return of fever and was full of hope and energy. "Our friend will not come," said he, "till all the ships are gone except the *Santa Croce*." Nevertheless, he took to scanning the horizon with anxious eyes. At last one night he said :

"The ship is due to-morrow."

The day came . . . and passed.

"It is very rough," said Xavier, as they turned in for the night. "He has been delayed."

The next day passed also. Their stock of rice was very low, and they were surrounded only by piles of blackened ashes and a strange, uncanny silence, instead of the boisterous company which had been there so lately. The nights were increasingly cold, and the rough hut little protection against the icy wind. Even the Chinese junks had left the harbour, and only the *Santa Croce*, which

had brought them, lay at anchor some way from the land. Often, while the Father was at prayer, Antonio would row himself out to the ship to ask for food. But the Captain was growing impatient, and sent back messages to the effect that if the junk did not soon appear the Father must return with him or starve.

One afternoon, when the dreaded symptoms of fever had reappeared, Antonio implored him to come out to the ship. He had always refused before, dreading lest the Captain, having him safely on board, should weigh anchor and insist on leaving the island. But this time, almost dazed by the increasing pain in his head, he yielded, and let Antonio support him to the little rowing-boat.

The lad covered him with such ragged blankets as he had been able to collect from those left behind, and pulled out towards the *Santa Croce*. The sailors drew them up the ship's ladder, and allotted them a tiny cabin, as night was falling. All through the night he was in a high fever, but grew quieter towards morning. Next day he was very weak, but perfectly collected, and in great distress at having yielded to Antonio's suggestion.

"This is cowardice, Antonio," he said. "We must return to the island; the junk may come to-day, and not finding us may sail again before we see it." And seeing that he was determined, and that no persuasions could move him, the lad obeyed and helped him once more into the boat.

"Here, Chinaman," and a sailor thrust something into Antonio's hand. "Here is a bag of almonds for you, to give your rice a flavour, and a pair of boots for the Father, for his feet look blue with the cold."

Xavier heard, smiled, and blessed him, and in a few

minutes Antonio's strong arms had rowed them back to the shore. The morning was bitterly cold, and the effort of climbing down the ship's ladder had been too great for Xavier's failing strength. He sank half-fainting on to the rocky beach and sat resting against a boulder, his hands pressed to this tortured head, and when Antonio spoke to him he replied incoherently, as though unable to collect his thoughts.

Antonio looked round in despair. Should he return once more to the ship and ask for help?

The desolate, wind-blown beach stretched on either side of him, the blackened heaps of burnt huts in the distance, the cold moaning of the sea behind. How could he leave the Father in this state? yet how help him if he remained? He would have welcomed even a Chinaman at that moment, but not a soul was in sight.

All at once a broad, square-shouldered figure with a rolling gait came in sight from behind one of the boulders of rock which strewed the beach. Antonio sprang up, ran towards him and seized him by the arm.

"For the love of Heaven, senhor," he said.

It was the boatswain of the *Santa Croce*.

He came across and stood considering, embarrassed and pitiful. "He should be bled," said he. "It is the only thing in a high fever. I've done it myself ere now. My hut is on the other side of the bay. Come, we'll row him across."

The boatswain's hut was a degree larger and of more finished structure than their own, and here the two men laid Fray Francisco on a heap of straw covered by an old cloak, while the boatswain set about his primitive surgery. A long fainting fit followed the bleeding, and as the day went on the fever returned, and with it the pain and rest-

lessness. Crouched beside him, Antonio watched every movement, every change in his Father's face.

"You love him, eh?" the boatswain asked, with a rough sort of compassion; to which Antonio answered with a smothered sound like a strangled sob. Xavier, who had seemed to be almost unconscious, put out his hand and touched the lad's shoulder.

Two days passed. He could take no food, and the repeated bleeding reduced his strength. Often he wandered, and Antonio, listening to every word, was at a loss to understand his talk of Paris lecture rooms, of "Pierre," and of "Senhor Ignazio," but he knew when he was reasoning with or rebuking Don Alvaro, knew too when he was pleading in tones of piercing tenderness with "Paulo," "my son Paulo," "you, the firstfruits of Japan . . . you *cannot* deny the Faith." Once, after some incoherent murmuring, he spoke out with joyful energy.

"Yes, Father," he said, as though answering a question; "yes, by the grace of God our Lord I have opened a way into China."

After that Antonio heard no more names, but only murmured words of prayer and sentences from the Psalms. He was so evidently sinking that the boatswain shook his head, swore a little under his breath, and went out, leaving Antonio to watch by him alone. For a time he seemed to be in some distress, and Antonio, listening to every word, caught a Latin sentence with which he was familiar.

"*If Thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark—what is done amiss—*"

As the third night wore away he seemed to lose all pain and distress, and in the white dawn his face glowed

with such utter joyousness that the lad could only watch it, fascinated by its unearthly beauty, and unable to believe that this transformation could be the approach of death. He lay as though wrapt in the contemplation of some ineffable loveliness which was already reflected in his own look, and Antonio, awed as he was, had a sudden longing for some look or sign of recognition, a sort of jealousy of the uncomprehended vision which was drawing Fray Francisco's heart away from him.

"Father," he whispered fearfully.

Xavier smiled faintly, and his transparent hand moved just perceptibly towards the lad.

Antonio scarcely heard a step outside, and was unaware that the boatswain, with a distressed look on his tanned and wrinkled face, was standing in the doorway.

"'Tis a plaguey nuisance, lad," he began in a hoarse whisper, "but the Captain swears he will not wait another day, and we must bring the Father on board. Ah, pardon——" he broke off, struck into sudden awe by the sight before him, and he fell awkwardly upon his knees as though he were in some holy presence.

There was a long silence in the hut, and during the silence the tireless spirit of Francisco de Xavier escaped to its rest.



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